Why Beautiful Women Commit Suicide

MIDNIGHT

OCTOBER 7, 1922

A Macfadden Publication

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Does Nature Sanction the Moral Laws ? See page 19

Are the Crooks Cleverer than the Cops ? asks Commissioner Richard Enright

Posed by Hallie Manning of the Ziegfeld Follies

OUT of the NIGHT A Mystery Short Story

Thrills! Thrills! Thrills!

MIDNIGHT THRILLS are pouring into this office with every mail. From all over the country they come—east, west, south and north. Thrills! Oh, boy! You ought to read them! *You* must have a midnight thrill to send in Don't delay, as the time is getting short—the contest closes at MIDNIGHT, October 14th, 1922.

Don't forget! There are EIGHTEEN PRIZES! Your chance is as good as anybody else's. Send in your thrill at once. Perhaps YOU will win the first prize of two hundred and fifty dollars.

On page 29 of this issue of MIDNIGHT we are printing a few of those entries that we consider really thrilling. There are plenty of others just as thrilling, so we don't mean that those we print will win a prize necessarily.

If you have a real thriller—SEND IT IN!

And remember—NO MORE THAN THREE HUNDRED WORDS.

Other details and conditions of the contest appear below.

$250.00 *for the best adventure.*
$100.00 *for the next best adventure.*
$ 50.00 *for the third best adventure.*

$25.00 *for the fourth best adventure.*
$10.00 *for the fifth best adventure.*
And prizes of **$5.00** *each for the* **13** *next best adventures.*

This competition is open to everyone, except employees of MIDNIGHT and their families.

In the event of a tie for any of the prizes, each tying contestant will receive the full amount of the prize tied for.

Literary excellence will not be a factor. Only the merit of the adventure from the standpoint of its being thrilling is all that counts.

The prize winning adventures will all be published in MIDNIGHT, and those we publish which do not win prizes, will be paid for at our regular rates for stories.

You may send in as many stories as you like, providing each covers a different adventure.

The contest begins at once and will close on October 14th, 1922. The winners will be announced in the November 11th issue of MIDNIGHT.

Address your stories, or any questions about the contest, to the THRILL EDITOR, MIDNIGHT, 119 West 40th Street, New York City.

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Cover, posed by Hallie Manning of the Ziegfield Follies.

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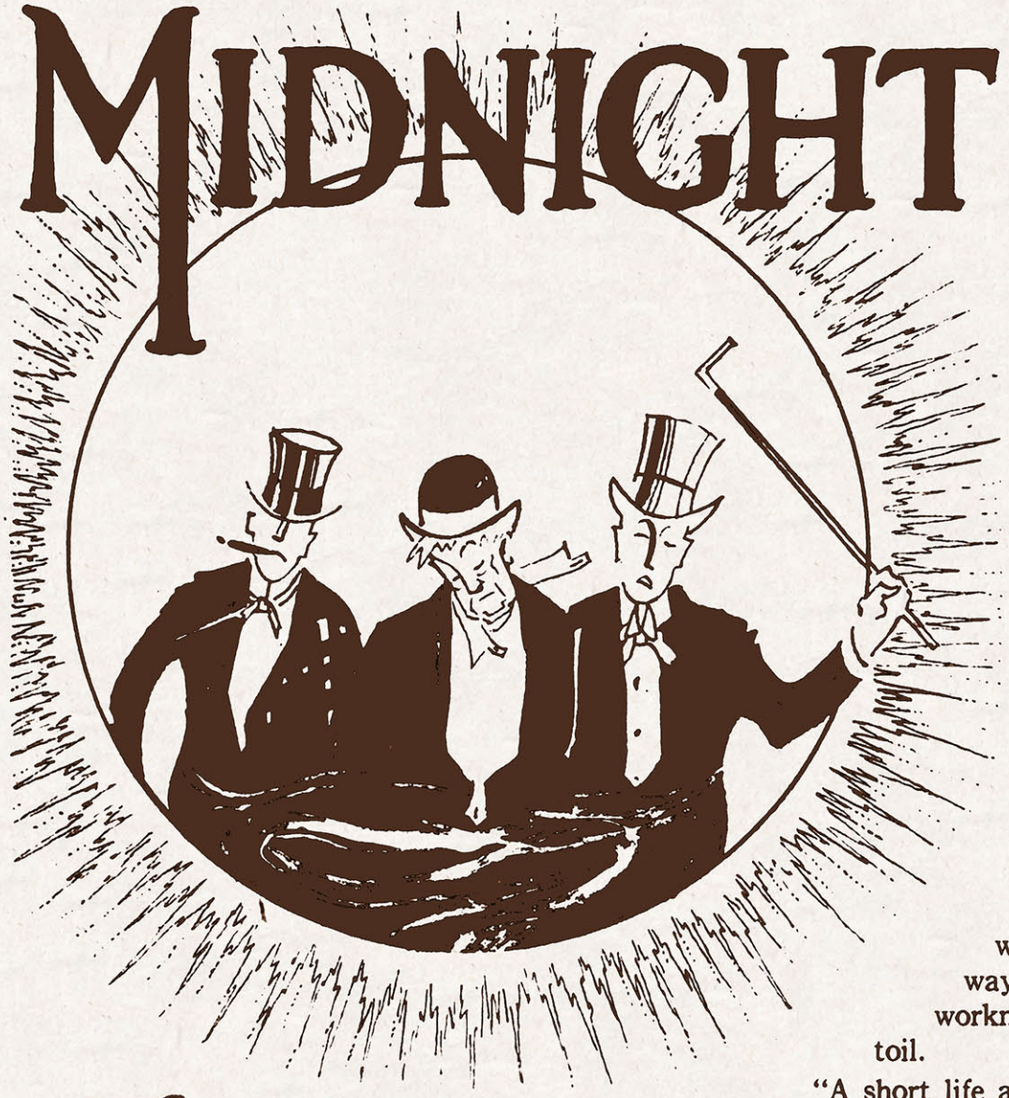
VOLUME 1 NUMBER 8

MIDNIGHT SONS



An Editorial by Bernarr Macfadden

THEY are a swagger set—these boys.

Vain and boastful, gay and contemptuous, they pursue their way from den to dive, from dive to bedlam.

You never see them by day. The light of God's own sunshine seldom penetrates through the thick silken curtains that hide their hard-bought morning shame.

But at night—along the gay, white ways of the world—they elbow women and children off the highway and toss a sneer at the shambling workman whose back is bent with honest toil.

"A short life and a merry one," they cry.

Indeed their's is a short life!

They measure hours, not by achievement, but by license; they measure days by deviltry and months by mirth.

Are they as happy as they seem to eyes that may envy their careless freedom?

You'll find the answer in broken bodies and seared souls.

Wardens, grave-diggers, keepers of poor-farms, cheap lodging-house proprietors and many a sorrowing mother can tell you something about that.

There is a disease that effects a decay of the bony structures of the body. A prominent actress recently died from it. Her physician said she was too little in the sunlight during her active career.

Too little in the sunlight!

Men die every day from some complaint aggravated by that condition.

It particularly afflicts midnight sons—those swaggering youths who know the price of everything but the value of nothing.

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How I Begged a

"Doc" Miller tells

"Anybody who works for a living in New York City is a sucker!" That's what "Doc" Miller says, and he ought to know. Read this article and learn how foolish you were to have learned double entry bookkeeping, or how to transcribe one hundred words a minute!

ANYBODY who works for a living in New York City is a sucker.

I know what I am talking about, for I haven't turned a lick of real work since Texas went Republican, and since coming to this man's town right after the World's Fair in 1904 I've averaged $150 a week.

And I've got a house and farm down on Long Island, money in three banks, two fine kids who are going through school, a wife who's got it all over some of these Broadway chorus wrens and a flat right on the hooskirts of the roaring Forties, where we've a Victrola, some good clothes and all we want to eat and drink.

And the whole works were accumulated from the pennies, nickels and dimes tossed into my hat by the good-natured guys that wear out their rubber heels in the streets of the big town.

I'd have an automobile too if it wasn't that one of my pins is cut off just above the knee and the other at the hip, and I'm scared to take a chance tryin' to pump the brakes with the artificials I wear after business hours.

Understand, I'm not a beggar. I'm a merchant. Every year I go down where that statue of Civic Virtue is located, in Mayor Hylan's back yard so it can give the politicians a laugh, and part with a whole dollar in exchange for a peddler's badge about the size of a Park Avenue soda cracker. That is my license to sell my special line of lead-pencils in the public thoroughfares, and it ain't my fault if most of the people in New York can't write and just pass up my stock when they drop coins into my lid.

New York is the easiest city on top of the earth, and there ain't no doubt that every year the people that live here, and their friends who drift here to blow their savings, slip about $20,000,000 into the hats and mitts of the men and women who are out to collect the soft money.

That's a lot of kale, but it's a good thing for the people at that. Every time a guy flips a blind man, an old woman or a cripple, a piece of change, he feels that he is a pretty good feller and throws out his chest for a thrill. The women generally cough up because they think it brings 'em luck.

But don't get the idea that the only guys who get the easy pickings are the ones that's shy on legs, arms and eyes, or are too old to chew hard food Nix on that. Anybody who don't want to work can get by if he has a bean under his hair and plenty of nerve. I ain't going to supply no complete classified directory of easy grafts here, but I'll just mention a few to show that I ain't spoofing, as the fellers that use slang would say. Right now any guy who is too well set up physically to make a hit begging and knows the ropes can grab off more of the long green each week than most of the rah-rah graduates by steerin' trade to the bootleggers, acting as cappers for the ticket speculators, scalpin' fight tickets, keeping tab on the ambulance cases at the big hospitals for the shyster lawyers, getting bondsmen for the guys that get pinched and don't want to face the Headquarters' line-up or by sitting as stalls in the sight-seeing buses until the come-ons begin to pile into the pews. That rubber neck graft is good, 'cause you can sit down to it. A few willing to take long chances duck in and out among the automobiles in the Fifth Avenue and the theatrical districts when the cops slow 'em up, and let some of the machines bump 'em. Then they set up a holler and the drivers usually settle for a five or a ten rather than take a chance of being ticketed for court.

But why shouldn't we little fellers get the coin? You never heard of any of the big boys getting out with the pick and shovel to earn the gelt to support their gas wagons and buy their turtle soup, did you? Take the bucket-shoppers for instance. Why, the profits of those boys make us look like lame snails in the race for the coin, and they're crooked besides.

Of course, you know there's been an awful howl raised in the last few weeks against us merchants, just because one of the undefeated champion boobs of the profession spilled the beans and put the *vox populi* or the *nux vomica*, or whatever it is they call the common people in the thirty-five-cent magazines, wise to the fact that any man with a missing limb or any woman with gray hair and a make-up of seen-better-days clothing can clean up enough kale by sitting still and waiting for the passers-by to drop money into their hats or mitts to make Henry Ford wonder if he didn't get into the wrong game.

Right now the police are acting a little peeved, but the storm will blow over. They always do. New Yorkers forget quicker than any people on earth. Why we don't even remember the saloon free lunches, and think of the number of years they supplied most of the food for the males of this burg.

I KNOW every cripple that has collected easy money in New York for years, and I was hep to this guy Horton Malone, named after the ice cream I guess, that started the newspapers featurin' news about us merchants alongside what Congress didn't do to settle the coal strike and the bootlegger specials. Out in the street, with both legs off and pushin' himself around on his dinky platform, he looked the real goods and he kept himself clean and had a pitiful look. I guess he cleaned up about two hundred berries a week. None of us guys cared a whoop how he spent his coin, and it was his business if he and his wife and kids lived in a Broadway hotel, sported diamonds after working hours and had an automobile and a chauffeur.

But where he pulled his prize bloomer was when he tried to fight a lawyer and a Tammany lawyer at that. The law juggler did a stunt for him, but Malone wouldn't settle, and the newspapers got wise to the whole shooting-match when the sheriff got busy and grabbed off the automobile. Malone just proved that he didn't belong at all and he ought to be peddling Siberian waffle-irons or toothpicks for left-handed men instead of working marks and frails along the avenue.

There's no excuse for Malone. He knew the game and he ought to have been tickled silly to

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Fortune from You

how he panhandles on City Streets

pay the bill for a $100 and keep quiet. He could have made that up and more on any two sunny matinee days. Last year two other corner workers got into the papers, but that was the fault of the cops. One of them, Swede Danielson, was nicked in the Penn Station near the Seventh Avenue entrance by a railroad dick. In the half hour before he was pinched he grabbed off about twenty-six cases, and he rattled like a tin bank when they shook him out at the station-house, for he had more than six hundred pennies in his jeans. He drew a suspended sentence, because he had a license and a handful of pencils when he was plucked by the flattie.

The other was an old woman over sixty. Her name was Elopoulou, but I don't know whether she was a Russian or a Dago. She lived with her daughter over in Fifty-ninth Street. She put up a scrap when the matron searched her, but they found a belt under her skirts in which there was about $2,000 in real money. She was so old the judge let her go, but the papers raised a holler and put a dent in our business for a few days.

But take it from me, most of the bull printed after Malone pulled his Charlie Chaplin was pure bunk. One yarn said that there are about 16,000 beggars in New York. The guy that made that crack must be using a new brand. There ain't that many beggars in Bagdad, where it is the leading industry and dates back to the time when they put lightning rods on the Pyramids.

BARNUM said there was a sucker born every minute, but my guess is that he's about 1,000 per cent off his total. Just the same, there ain't enough dubs in all New York, includin' the visiting delegates from the tall timbers, to support that number of beggars. Take 'em all in, merchants like me, grafters and plain panhandlers, and there ain't more than 6,000, though the newspaper stories about how easy the graft is here is bringing in a lot of new ones from all over the country every day, and the pickings may be lean this winter, particularly if the price of coal goes the limit. Believe me, I'd like to be in that coal graft.

I'll put you wise to the real situation here and tell you just how I came to break into the game, and I'll lay my cards straight.

It sure is funny how a lot of us drift into this game, but most of us have had enough experiences to make a tower elevator look like a stationary engine when it comes to ups and downs.

I first began to annoy my parents in Troy, N. Y. It's a place you know, and most everybody up there used to make clean collars, even if a lot of them didn't wear 'em. I was just naturally born lazy, and it took a club to get me to even go on an errand. If I was paid a dime to do something, I'd hire another kid to do it for a nickel and sit in the shade and watch him work.

My old man, who was a school teacher before he reformed and went into politics, was wise to me, and for that reason, I guess, decided to make a lawyer of me. How I ever got through the grammar school I don't know, but plenty of lickings helped a lot. Anyway, at sixteen, with some education and a desire to beat it from home and see the world, I started on my travels, and for ten years I managed to exist without ever doing anything that required me to use my muscle much more than to lift my knife and fork and walk. In that time I panhandled, was barker for all kinds of hick shows that went through the sticks, sold red lemonade with circuses and acted as lookout and capper for crooked gambling-houses. The fact that I could read and write and do a little figuring started the boys calling me "Doc," and it's stuck ever since.

That "Doc" thing got me into trouble once, though. I had a sign painted with the name "Doctor Miller," and tried to sell some swell bottles of water colored with iodine as a nerve tonic through the Nebraska belt. But the constables got wise that I didn't know much more about medicine than the difference between a corn plaster and a hot water bottle, and they gave me the hoose-gow for thirty days. Right there I determined to return to honest pursuits for all time.

The big change in my luck, and the one which shoved me into the lead-pencil game came in 1904, the year the big fair was held in St. Louis. I took part in about every kind of a graft pulled in old St. Looey to separate the rubes from their coin, and take it from me, it was the nearest I ever came to working, for those babies from the corn belt knew how to hang on to a jitney so that they made John D. look like a spendthrift.

JUST before the fair closed I got a job barking for a big barber shop, and all day long I stood outside yelling to the farmers that they could get a shave and haircut inside for fifteen cents. They did, all right, but the barbers also worked in everything from face massage to a rub with attar of garlic, and then demanded two or three dollars for extras. And they got away with it, for the rubes stopped squawking when the barbers threatened to call a cop. My rakeoff carried me to Cleveland, but there I went broke trying to win with the ivories. I was started for the East, and so tried ridin' the beams, but I fell off and when I got out of the hospital I was shy two legs that the rattler had cut off.

The charities took care of me for a week while I was trying to learn to make paper flowers, but I was about as much of a success at that as a celluloid gas stove. One day, while in the street getting the air and pulling myself along on my stumps, an old lady stopped me and gave me a five-spot. That settled my future.

By the next day I had panned more than enough to take me to the big town, and I landed here prepared to make the two-legged people of New York take care of me for the rest of my life. And they have, except a few trips I made to the seashore resorts or to towns where celebrations brought big crowds together.

For a time I had trouble because I didn't know the burgh and kept gettin' on other guys' territory. But that all worked out, and when I qualified as a regular with the push, the boys wised me up to all the inside stuff. It was a good thing they did, for I was ambitious and wanted to try some fancy stuff, like pretending that I had fainted from starvation and gags like that.

They told me that all that old hokum was played out with the real money getters, and that the cops pinched anyone who tried to pull a raw phoney. Some of the gang who had been in the game for years told me about old Lemaitre, the French beggar, who was a regular actor and the best faker in the city up to 1895, when he pulled the stunt that got him into the newspapers, almost busted up the begging game here, and forced the boys to take out a license and carry around a bunch of pencils or other junk. Honest, if anybody ever took one of my pencils after slippin' me a coin, I'd pass out.

But about Lemaitre. He was—and dressed like a bum, but he thought up a new stunt every week. His last gag, and the one that got him the gate, was a beaut. He'd put a crust of bread on the sidewalk when he saw some swell dames coming, and then, just as they got near him, he'd grab it up and eat it as if he was starvin' to death. He was cleaning up great on the gag when he happened to pull it on the wife of a police captain, and then it was curtains for him. The papers queered things for a time and printed a lot about the beggars of Paris who are trained just like going to school, and where some of the parents cripple their children so that they would look more pitiful when they were sent out to beg.

There always is a lot of fellers who won't even take the trouble to stall with a box of gum, and they always get into trouble with the cops. Only last year a bunch of boobs got gay, thinking the police had gone into a Rip Van Winkle, and they got nicked. Old Bobby McMahon, who's sixty if he's a day, and is called "Little Johnny Lookup" by the dicks, tried to pull his stunt of throwing fits in front of a lot of stenogs. They felt so sorry for him that they took up a collection and some of them gave him their bundles of lunch. Then the bulls grabbed him, lined him up before Judge Levine and, as he'd only been pinched about twelve times before for the fit act, he got a four months stretch. I ain't seen him since.

THEN "Jellyfish" Maxwell, from over in Brooklyn, who used to be a swell contortionist, pulled a raw one and went to the island for thirty days. He put on a sign reading "Please help a war veteran," and then with his arms and legs doubled up so as to look as if they was cut off and his clothes hangin' loose, started to work the avenue. A dick who was wise to him broke up his party, but not until "Jellyfish" had straightened out and given him a run for it.

He was one of the few I ever saw who could do that stunt or throw themselves out of joint, and all that stuff that the town is full of such birds is the bunk. I went to a movie where an actor pulled that gag, but that's about the only place you'll find it. People get sick and turn away from beggars who give them the horrors, and you can get a lot more

(*Continued on page* 30)

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Was Man Made *for* Marriage?

Rev. Percy Stickney Grant, who has some strong things to say about the current divorce laws, especially that part of the law that has to do with the re-marriage of divorced persons

Mrs. Phillip Lydig

Rev. Christian F. Reisner, who thinks that family life in America is in grave danger. He says that we are being cheapened and degraded in all Europe by our scornful indifference to the sacredness of the home

Is marriage, after all, an institution for man?—that is, was marriage made for man, or was man made for marriage? Not to mention woman, of course—she speaks for herself. This illuminative article by Margaret McIvor Tyndall, who wields a wicked typewriter, will answer most questions you can ask about what to do after you get your divorce

THE Reverend Percy Stickney Grant has changed his mind about the divorce question.

And he is a man whose views are always interesting, usually important and almost certainly startling.

In fact, the Reverend is so radical in his utterances, he is said to be quite a thorn in the side of the conservative element of the Episcopal Church. On more than one occasion the Bishop of the Diocese is said to have disciplined this exuberant minister of the gospel.

Time was when all the reverends throughout Christendom were a unit in regarding divorce, the divorced, and the would-be's, as quite beyond the respectable atmosphere of the church-goers.

Some of the churches have modified their stand in respect to this mal-odorous special pestilence. Truth to tell they had to if they would retain any appreciable membership. Some things are stronger than religious canons—one of them is Love—and what passes for love.

But the Episcopal church has stood out strongly against divorce and it has stood adamantinely against the re-marriage of divorced couples within the Church.

The ministers of the Church have apparently upheld this decision as one of justice and righteousness. If there have been dissenting voices here and there—they have been hushed. But the Reverend Percy Stickney Grant, rector of the church of the Ascension, generally says whatever he thinks—at least so far as the ecclesiastical restrictions of his Church will permit. And the Reverend Grant dissents, loudly, persistently, even enthusiastically, does he dissent from the time-honored ruling that the marriage of divorced couples shall not be sanctioned and made holy by the Episcopal service.

Of course, if they want to go beyond the pale of the Church and take matters into their own hands—. The Church Pontius-Pilates its hands of them, that's all.

That many people do just that same—go beyond the jurisdiction and sancity and everything of the Church—and of all churches, is the vital point in the Reverend Grant's fight (I think he calls it a fight), for the right of divorced couples to remarry—and within the Episcopal church.

Many of the ideas expressed by the Reverend Mr. Grant are—well, they are what some persons no doubt would call radical—even Bolshevistic. But that isn't saying they are not quite all right. Dear me, no! We are merely reporting the incident. And we are bound to admit that there are evil-minded persons—not you or me of course, but others, you know—! Persons who are mean enough to hint that if the Reverend Percy Stickney Grant, did not happen to want to marry a divorcee (raised to the second degree; once from Mr. Hoyt and once from Mr. W. E. D. Stokes), perhaps he would not feel so keenly the injustice of the Episcopalian conscience. But you know how people are. They always find a "naugh-ti-rier" motive, as the chorus girl remarked.

REGARDLESS of its personal flavor—if one may so speak of so ethical a theme as divorce—the rector of the Church of the Ascension voices sentiments that are revolutionary in the ultra-respectable atmosphere that surrounds the canons of the Episcopalian creed. Whatever you and I may think of them, they must be about as welcome in the Convention of Protestant Episcopal bishops as a bill-collector at a Yiddish wedding.

(*Continued on page 24*)

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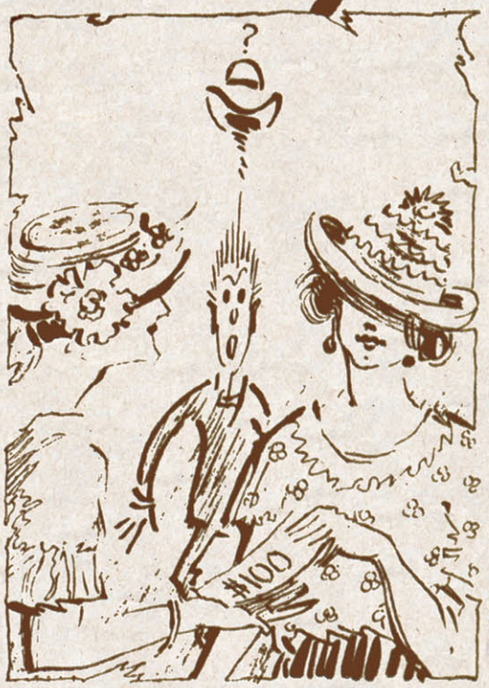
Now Who's Looney?

There are one hundred thousand crazy people walking the streets of Paris. How many are there in New York? T. Bell, in this amusing yarn, tells us all about it.



"YOU assert then that the defendant is crazy?"

"Yes, your honor."

"On what do you base your deduction, doctor?" asks the judge.

"He thinks he is Napoleon Bonaparte, Your Honor."

"And he isn't?" the judge inquires interestedly.

"No, Your Honor," the alienist replies. "Napoleon died in 1819."

"Very good," the judge glares at the man. "I shall order the defendant committed to an asylum for the insane. Call the next case."

That's the way they *used* to do it.

You were either sane or insane; if the former you were permitted to roam at large, if the latter you were put away.

But it isn't so easy to tell the difference nowadays.

And yet—suppose we put it this way:

"You assert, then, that the defendant is crazy?"

"Yes, Your Honor."

"Tell the jury on what you base your opinion."

"I saw him drink a slug of bootleg liquor, Your Honor, and as everyone in their right mind knows, the chances of death at worst, or blindness at best, are as fifty to one. I can only assume that drinking bootleg liquor is the act of a mentally unbalanced person."

"H-h-um," the judge clears his throat, or is there the faintest suspicion of a whiskey cough in the operation, "I can scarcely commit a man to an institution on such inconclusive evidence. Discharged. Call the next case."

The expert who placed the number of crazy persons walking the streets of Paris at 100,000 should take a slant at some of our American cities, and New York would be a good one to begin with.

We do not know for certain how many potentially insane persons there are walking about New York right this minute, but 300,000 would seem to be a conservative estimate.

Not that New Yorkers are three times as crazy as Parisians, only that there are more people to go crazy in New York. And then prohibition has so affected the minds of hundreds of thousands of people that, unable to concentrate their minds on anything else, they have gradually drifted into a mental state highly resembling insanity; if, indeed, they may not be said to have become actually insane.

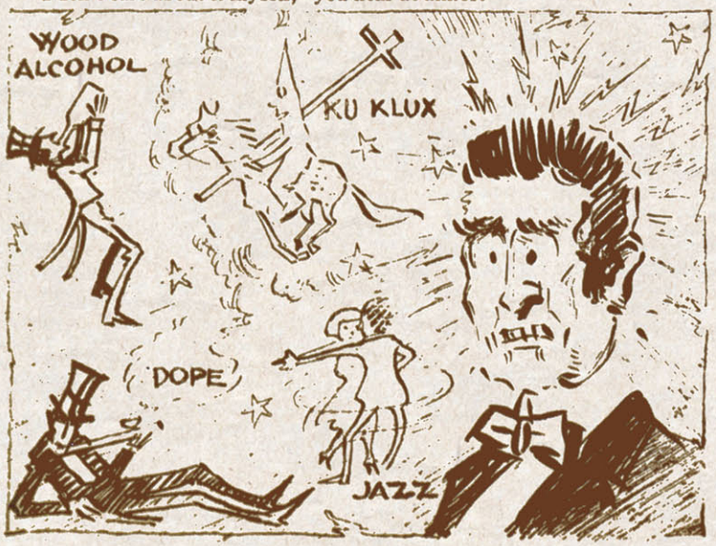
"I don't care about it myself," you hear at almost any street corner, "but when a lot of hicks think they can shove this here prohibition thing down our throats they got another guess coming."

"If they was an election tomorrow," says another, "you'd see them prohibition hounds running for cover. The country would go wet."

"I make it myself," a third party cuts in. "I got the one and only recipe for home-brew. Put up six dozen bottles last week."

"If they wanted to close the saloons tomorrow they could do it," asserts a bystander. "They git so much graft keeping 'em open, no one wants to close them. That's my idea."

Now these people, and thousands like them, may not be crazy enough to be put away, but they are surely unbalanced enough to bear watching. How many of them are wandering about the principal American cities no man can say.



THEN love is driving so many folks crazy these days.

Time was when a fellow fell in love with a girl, married her, and lived happily ever after. You read about that stuff now in fairy stories.

First came psycho-analysis.

What chance does the average man have to know what it means when even Freud and Tridon and all the other adherents of this cult don't know what it is about themselves.

The minute you begin to try to psycho-analyze yourself you take a path that if consistently followed leads right straight into the bughouse.

You begin to analyze your dreams—you begin to analyze your emotions—you next start on your friends until there is nothing in the world left for you to do but get out of the way of progress and let a live man or woman pass you. You become, in other and plainer words, a nut—and a nut is crazy.

To be sure there have always been brainstorms, suicides and murders inspired by sex emotions.

But there are more today than ever before.

Vera Anderson, a pretty and accomplished Brooklyn girl, experiences a disillusionment in love and her brain snaps. She is committed to the Kings Park Hospital.

A Long Island school teacher is brutally murdered by her fiance; an Ohio girl is lured into ambush and slaughtered by her sweetheart; a Bronx flapper goes joy-riding with her beau and is thrown out of the motor-car along Pelham Parkway to be picked up dead the next morning.

Multiply these by a hundred or a thousand and you have some idea of the havoc modern love is creating.

Are these the actions of sane people?

No, they are crazy. Had their actions been anticipated they would have been clapped into asylums before they had a chance to do any damage.

Before they committed these crimes they walked the streets, mingled with their friends, sat down at the table and ate with the family even as you and I. Suddenly they broke loose. Crazy!

The Parisian, in support of his evidence, quotes the case of a plasterer suddenly bamming a fellow worker across the brow with a plank, killing him instantly; another case of a bookkeeper smashing a co-worker on the head with an inkwell.

In New York we would consider those two incidents trifling eccentricities, worthy a line or two in a sensational newspaper.

In Chicago the wife of an Associate Justice of the Illinois Supreme Court pays a man $2,000 to teach her how to raise the dead; in California a rich woman offers to buy another woman's husband and pay her $100 a week for him; in New Jersey a girl starts a "Cupid's Court" to help brokenhearts make satisfactory lovematches.

It would be unjust to assert that these are evidences of insanity—yet, they make us pause and stroke our chin and wonder if the whole world isn't going crazy.

What is the cause of these alarming conditions?

"It is a universal paganism," the ministers of the gospel cry. "We need to get back to the religion of

(*Continued on page* 30)

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Out of the Night

This strong story, by Lyon Mearson, is guaranteed to make the blood run cold in your veins.

DICK RICHARDS, the junior partner of the firm of Carrington & Richards, figured busily with the stub of his pencil on the flap of a discarded envelope. Carrington looked on in silence. Dick stopped calculating and the frown on his face increased. The older man shifted uneasily in his swivel chair, but said nothing. The quiet between them deepened, and was broken at last by the senior partner just before it became unbearable.

"How much do you make it, Dick?" he inquired easily, but there was an anxious note in his tone that could not escape notice.

"Same as before—five thousand," replied Richards.

"Just enough for the payroll tomorrow," commented Carrington. "And after that——" he paused suggestively.

"After that, the deluge," finished Richards. They both dropped into silence again, staring into the face of infinity, each busy with his thoughts. The first thought that flashed into the brain of Dick was of his wife, a bride of six months. "What would it mean to her?" Over and over he turned the phrase in his mind. What would it mean to her, to be the wife of a failure. He winced as the word occurred to him, yet that was the bare truth of it, the rude fact in all its ugly nakedness. A failure!

"Unless——" he said it aloud, hardly knowing he was speaking.

"Unless old man Phillips comes across," Carrington finished his thought. "Don't worry, old man," he said kindly. "I know how you feel about—all this, but it will come out all right. You're going to see Phillips tonight, aren't you? If you can get him to see things our way, it will pull us through in great shape. And I'm going right off now to see Jenkins—there's a good chance with him, I think."

There was less of gloom and dispirit in Dick's face as he looked up—he had almost forgotten Phillips; and yet there was a very good prospect of bringing him around. He would have to go to Delmar this night, despite the impending storm.

Long after the senior partner had left the office on his way to see Jenkins, Carrington sat at his desk, staring blackly into the grim vista of Ruin. He roused himself at last and made out a check for five thousand dollars, wiping out their account. The hands had to be paid, whatever happened. Next week—but that was next week, and many things might happen—the chief among them being failure.

* * * * *

The Richards house was on the outskirts of the town of Waring, a full half mile from its nearest neighbor, and there was a lonesome, gloomy look about it at night that was entirely absent by day, probably due to its long, sloping roof and its small windows. By day it was a pretty little house, with its ivy-grown porch and green-covered doorway.

A wandering wind had arisen this evening, a wind that presaged more snow. It swept sharply around the corners of the isolated, lonely house, trying the windows and doors as with a stealthy hand.

INSIDE the little house were contentment and happiness, however, as dainty little Wilma Richards set the table, with a song on her lips. The hackneyed old song quivered in the still home air like a benediction above the click of the china and the slight rattle of the silver:

Alone in the country, with a great sum of money in the house. What did this courageous woman do when a sinister figure rapped on her door late at night, appearing out of the raging storm? This story will thrill you to the last word

She started suddenly and stiffened to attention, every faculty strained. Slowly she could see the knob turning—there was another sound—the sound of a push. The door held. There were a few moments of silent terror for her. . . . "Who is there?" she demanded

Soft o'er the fountain,
Ling'ring falls the southern moon,
Far o'er the mountain,
Breaks the day too soon!

From the small, diamond-shaped windows the beacon shafts of light cut the swiftly gathering darkness cheerily, and a fine crimson light shone through the door. Wilma dropped what she had in her hand when she heard a step on the porch, and ran to the door to greet the figure of her husband as he came in, trying to shake off the vagrant snowflakes that had already settled on his great coat, a portent of the storm to come—nay, the storm that was already getting into its full vicious swing.

He held her close to him for a moment, and then she helped him off with his coat, as was her custom.

"Cold, isn't it?" she asked, just for the pure joy of talking to him. What difference did it make to her if it was cold—they were together, and warm!

"Going to be a whopping storm, honey," he said, and tried to make his tone light, but did not succeed very well. She looked up quickly.

"What's the matter, Dick?" she asked at once. "You don't have to go out, do you?"

"By Jove!" he said suddenly, a deep vertical crease appearing between his eyebrows. "I clean forgot it was Hannah's night out." He looked, troubled, at the handbag he had placed carefully on the coatrack shelf as he came in. It contained five thousand dollars, the pay for the hands in the morning—and all the money Carrington & Richards had in the world. It was his custom to bring it home every Friday night; but he had never left his wife alone with it.

"I am sorry, but I'm afraid you'll be alone most of the night," he said slowly. "I must go to Delmar tonight."

"In this storm?" she said in a tone of protest, and the look of distress and entreaty in her upturned

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Are the Crooks Cleverer than the Cops?

An Interview With Richard E. Enright

Police Commissioner City of New York

Richard E. Enright, Police Commissioner of the greatest metropolis in the Western World

Richard E. Enright has just been elected head of the International Police Conference, composed of the chiefs of police of the entire world. This unusual interview was given to E. A. Goewey, a prominent newspaper man of New York

THE James Boys, the Younger Brothers, and others of their ilk, crook headliners of that period when the Wild West held the spotlight position as the world's most notorious stamping ground for criminals, have passed over the Great Divide for all time.

But a newer and far more clever, dangerous and desperate type of criminal has arisen to take their places; a type so remarkably resourceful and able that the police, even in the world's greatest capitals, frequently are driven to their wit's end to bring to book these denizens of the underworld. And, too often, because of the superlative cunning of the felons, the authorities have been unable to apprehend and punish perpetrators of major crimes.

Truly, the modern offenders against society make their predecessors of the old days appear like blundering amateurs by comparison. If Jesse James were alive now and he attempted to operate as he did in his heyday, not only would he get mighty short shift from the authorities, but the entire criminal fraternity would unite in awarding him the fur-lined shaving mug for supreme stupidity.

Back in the criminal age of yesterday, particularly in the Middle and Far West, the crooks displayed practically no finesse, depending upon terrorism and ruthlessness to carry them through. Operating, sometimes singly or in pairs, but usually in bands, they wantonly murdered all who opposed them and apparently cared little about concealing their identity, the black masks sometimes worn being little more than a part of their conventional makeup. It was merely a question of time when they were hunted down or assassinated by some of their own kind. Practically all of them died with their boots on and comparatively few ever saw the interior of prison cells.

Even the casual observer has noted the difference between the new and the old time offenders, and the superior intelligence of the former. But the present-day criminals, unfortunately, have adopted one custom of the old-line Western bandits—the trick of using deadly weapons upon the slightest provocation; and from one end of the country to the other, throughout the underworld, every crook is a "gat toter."

Formerly the Eastern outlaws feared to shoot except in extreme cases lest the resultant noise bring capture. However, with the advent of the high-powered automobile, that fear vanished, and today's crimes usually are punctuated with pistol shots.

Today's criminal element, taken as a class and drawing a fair average, constitutes one of the keenest, most progressive and resourceful divisions of the body politic. To be sure, there are all grades of malefactors, but the persistent professional crooks, often unlettered and uncouth, but quite frequently possessing the *savoir faire* of men and women of parts and understanding, are all students, diligent, patient, thorough. To them time means little or nothing. Where the average honest man must, quite frequently, take snap judgment and move swiftly, they can afford to move with the utmost deliberation, planning to the most minute detail toward the accomplishment of a fixed purpose.

Therefore, it is as obvious as the rattle of a flivver, that the cops, to hold the crooks in check, prevent much contemplated crime and apprehend and punish those who succeed in carrying out their schemes of outlawry, must do better than keep parallel with the law breakers. Old style police methods will not turn the trick and neither will a force composed of men who fairly shriek that they are cops from the dome of their hats to the squeak of their shoes. The modern force, to be really efficient, must be distinctly up-to-the-minute in every particular, and be equipped with every proved system or device which will aid in the detection of crime and criminals.

ONE of the weakest points in the conduct of American police departments is that, except in a few places where there is state supervision, each municipality appoints, controls and pays its operatives. This scheme, necessarily, calls for fixed salaries for the men in the different grades of work, and as such stipends are, quite frequently, none too liberal, the classes of persons from which appointments must be made are limited. Then again, politics sometimes brings about the appointment of men for police duty who are utterly unfitted for the work, not to overlook the fact that in most cities the number of policemen is far too small for the labors they are expected to perform. As an instance, New York, the world's greatest and wealthiest city, has but 12,000 men, less in proportion than any of the other large cities, and despite the fact that within a radius of twenty-five miles from the City Hall, there are 15,000,000 persons living, most of whom have some business interest in the metropolis. Were we as liberally supplied with policemen as is London, New York would have a force of 26,000 men.

In most European countries, the city police heads are appointed by and are responsible to officials corresponding to our Attorney General, Secretary of State or Secretary of the Interior, and they are able to obtain the assistance of the government police, and in some instances that of the troops, whenever they feel that they require their services.

We long since stopped trying to catch birds by sprinkling salt upon their tails. Why not then abandon worn-out police methods? It is essential that we do so to keep ahead of the crooks.

One of the best methods of fixing the identity of a criminal—after you have caught him—is by the measurement system originated by Louis Adolphe Bertillon, the famous criminologist. But the clever crook long ago acquired the knack of changing his appearance, unless particularly marked or deformed, so that he could escape casual notice, and he need fear little except running afoul of cops who have been identified with his past, or of being remeasured. Changes in the style of haircut, elimination of mustache or whiskers, radical changes in the cut of clothing worn, all help the men of the underworld to keep out of the hands of the police. With the female of the species the change in makeup is easier, but they haven't the patience or the mental equipment to remain in hiding for long periods, and they are the more easily trapped because they must come out where the lights are bright and where there is companionship and excitement. What's the use of the women stealing to possess expensive jewelry and fine clothes if they can't display themselves appropriately bedecked.

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A rogues' gallery is an excellent adjunct to any police department, but its usefulness in many places is less than fifty per cent of what it should be. In this country there is no system by which the photographs of crooks are properly distributed throughout the country. Some day, it is to be hoped, there will be an adequate arrangement by which the photographs of criminals, as soon as they are taken, will be sent broadcast. In that way every gallery would be kept up to date, no matter what changes the crook might have made in his facial appearance. Right now many of the rogues' galleries around the country have dozens of pictures which are from fifteen to twenty years old and are therefore practically useless.

Then take the matter of fingerprints. They constitute one of the very best agencies for fixing the identity of criminals and are absolutely accurate. A fingerprint contains the same distinguishing marks throughout life and no two are alike. But even the so-called "rough necks" and yeggs try to beat this means of identification by wearing gloves.

The "line-up" at police headquarters, where criminals arrested over night are exhibited to the detective force, masked, each morning, is another excellent thing and serves to make the "cops" familiar with many crooks they otherwise would not be able to study at such close range. But the criminals, aided by a certain class of bonding companies which cater to them, and such lawyers as specialize in defending crooks, have found a method of interfering with the line-up plan. These agencies have their representatives well scattered through the city or within easy call, and no sooner is a crook arrested for an offence for which bail can be given at a station house, than a hurry message is sent out and in a little time the bond is furnished and the criminal is turned loose to await the opening of court the following morning. In this manner he escapes the line-up.

SCIENCE and invention, also, in recent years, have done much to aid the crooks, and in their varied enterprises the outlaws now use tools as finely made as those intended for the use of jewelers, chemistry, speedy motor-cars, the radio, the telegraph and the telephone. I believe that the automobile has been one of the chief causes for the increase in major crimes, particularly holdups and gang shootings, in recent years, for not only has it served as a means of speedy getaway, but it has enabled the crooks to move about freely. without fear of detection, something which they could not do if compelled to walk. It is only a question of time when the crooks will be using airships for other than smuggling and bootlegging, as at present.

For the purpose of making things as uncomfortable as possible for such criminals as make New York their stamping ground, the starting point for their operations or their hiding places when their ventures in other pastures are concluded, I am convinced that it is essential that a secret service division should be added to the metropolitan police force.

This division should consist of both men and women, not less than twenty-five and not more than about fifty, and their identities should be kept secret from all of the members of the regular force except the Police Commissioner and his deputies and an Inspector specially detailed to supervise them. It would not be difficult for these special detectives to remain incognito, and yet keep in constant touch with their superiors. Secret service work is highly specialized, but the general scheme of operation long since was worked out to a point of wonderful efficiency by our government, and by the police departments and the governments abroad. All that we would have to do would be to take the general plan and fit it to conditions and circumstances here.

In establishing a secret service department we would employ men and women capable of mingling in any division of society without exciting comment, and many of them would have other employment, the further to divert from them any suspicion that they were police agents. All of them would have to be brave, clever, educated and resourceful, and some of them should be able not only to act, dress and talk like persons of recognized social standing and wide experience, but should be able to do anything from operate a typewriter and take dictation to run an elevator, keep books, drive a motor boat or car, ride, shoot, fish, play golf or tennis and, possibly, be able to make a fair showing in an airplane. If they spoke a few languages and had a reasonable knowledge of the best in arts and letters, so much the better.

In Europe the secret agents of the police include men and women in every walk of life, and some are in very high positions in the diplomatic service and in the industrial and social life of their countries.

"New York is the cleanest large city in the world morally," says its Chief of Police in this superlatively interesting article

The men and women in the secret service division would, of necessity, be those who could be called upon to capture all classes of criminals, from the anarchists, members of secret blackmail bands such as the Blackhand and the yeggs, to the smoothest, best educated and most intelligent of the representatives of the underworld. The latter class, in particular, must be approached by new methods, for they are super-clever and often keep out of the clutches of the police for long periods. The work would be dangerous and would have to be paid for accordingly.

The high class criminals who work only for big stakes, almost always have a staff of able lieutenants to do their "dirty work," including good looking and fearless women, and they retain some of the shrewdest legal talent obtainable. They are always able to procure money to promote their enterprises, dress in the mode, and possess the tact and nerve which enables them to go almost anywhere. Some of them even maintain respectable homes and families at points removed from the scenes of their criminal operations. It is most difficult to trip these gentry before the commission of a crime and not much easier to nip them afterward, for they know thousands of schemes to prevent identification. No, they must be taken by persons fully as clever as they or more so; by persons who are able to mingle with them and their intended victims without arousing suspicion.

IT might be a good idea for the United States Government to make a careful registration of all foreigners entering the country and then cooperate with the various local police agencies in keeping track of the newcomers until they departed or became permanent residents. This is done in Europe, and with excellent results. Because of the fact that persons from abroad with sufficient funds to qualify them as travelers can come and go at will here, differences frequently arise between the police of this and other countries. If we cable for the apprehension of some person who has fled these shores, the European system of registration enables quick detection of the individual wanted, in most cases. On the other hand, our easy-going methods and lack of system in learning the business of foreign visitors, prevent us from reciprocating promptly, and for this reason the American police often are accused abroad of being deliberately indifferent. The European system of registration, if adopted in America, would serve to put a crimp in the efforts of the international crooks who come here to operate.

Americans have but little conception of the splendid type of men who dominate the police of Europe. Hans Schober, Police President of Vienna, for instance, is one of the brainiest men on the other side, brilliant in the extreme and a superior statesman. He headed the police for many years under the Imperial Government, but resigned when the republic was established. His resignation was refused, but he was permitted to serve as Chancellor for a year before he was called upon to return to his police duties. He is the strongest man in Austria today, and is supported by all parties, even the socialists.

M. Nauden, who succeeded the late Robert Lieullier as Prefect of the police of Paris, after the latter had served for twelve years, also is a man of attainments and of the highest standing, and the same can be said of M. Keffer, of Brussels, Herr Richter, of Berlin, and the heads of the departments in the larger cities of England and Italy. All of these men are figures of genuine importance, and their work and influence is nation wide, in contrast to the circumscribed spheres in which the American police heads are compelled to confine their activities.

A word about night life abroad, which is far different to that to which we are accustomed. In London there is nothing which we would consider night life at all. Everything there, theatres, cabarets and most of the eating places, close at eleven o'clock. And the Englishman is not gay as we understand the word. He takes his amusement quietly and sedately, only smiling indulgently at things which, in other countries and particularly in America, would cause hearty laughter. The better class of restaurants are most proper places, everyone in them apparently being fearful of making the slightest noise.

A high class London restaurant is best described by a story. One night several Americans obtained a table in a fashionable place, and in the course of the meal one of them told a funny story which caused his companions to roar with laughter. Instantly every head in the place was turned in the direction of the Americans, and they faced a battery of scowls. This peeved the story teller, and summoning the head waiter by a gesture, he inquired:

"Hasn't anyone ever laughed in this place before?"

"Oh my, yes sir," was the reply, "I recollect that on two occasions gentlemen forgot themselves."

Paris, Rome, Berlin and Vienna are quite lively after dark, and Brussels is not far behind them, but the only real gayety of the kind we know is between one and two o'clock in the morning.

HOWEVER, the war has left a most perceptible impression everywhere abroad, there is a pronounced absence of money and the old time splendor and dash are absent. New York, at present, is the most brilliantly lighted city at night, has the greatest number of places of entertainment and the largest number of persons with money to spend. And what is more important, it is the cleanest large city in the world morally. In many of the capitals abroad commercialized gambling is recognized as an institution and prostitution is accepted as a necessary evil, and the women of the streets, most of them so bedecked that there is no mistaking their trade, mingle freely with the crowds. There was a time when commercialized vice flourished here, but gambling and prostitution of that kind have been practically wiped out. Both were vicious and led to corruption and graft and a disrespect for the laws. One of the reasons for prevailing cleanly conditions in New York is that the police force has been divorced from politics, the ban of law enforcement.

I have nothing but words of praise for the manner in which the police on the other side perform their duties, though it would be out of the question for us to follow some of their methods. For instance, the London bobbies carry neither clubs nor revolvers, depending upon their fists and moral suasion. The assassination of Field Marshall Sir Harry Hughes Wilson, and the manner in which the murderers stood off the police temporarily, however, have started an agitation in favor of arming the London cops as ours are armed. In the other important European countries the police are, for the most part, armed with both swords and pistols, and in Italy where the police are divided into three classes there is one division which also carries rifles. However, the cops of Italy are good fighters, despite their superabundance of equipment and uniform.

"My Greatest Midnight Thrill"

You have until October 14, 1922, to send in your prize thrill—Remember, $500 in prizes

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Bring back the Chaperone

But who's going to chaperone the chaperone?

By P. Sommerville

IF you are the father, or mother, of girls you ought to realize how true it is that the chaperone does not exist today except in isolated cases. And yet, when you were growing up how many straw-rides, picnics, dances, or other forms of parties did you ever attend without the watchful eye of a capable chaperone being cast over all things said and done?

How many times this past summer has your daughter gone off on an evening's pleasure jaunt with girls and men who were almost total strangers under the guardianship of a responsible person?

Can you name one time?

Why has the chaperone dropped out of our social life?

Impulsive, shockingly inconoclastic, and eager to run its own affairs the younger American generation has unapologetically banned and damned the chaperone. The official high-priestess of the amusement hour who once acted as a sort of moral restraint incurred the disfavor of our young people because she threatened to become an obstacle in the way of youth's good times. Consequently she was knocked down from her pedestal and dragged out into the dust.

In the language of the youthful moderns the chaperone was "a bucket of cold water,—a damper—a killjoy who was always waiting to put a crimp in a good time."

So the chaperone just had to go!

Of course the parents had no say in the matter. What right have parents to tell modern children what to do?

If you are the kind of parent who feels, without the right and privilege to tell your offsprings how they must conduct themselves during the adolescent period, you don't deserve to have children because you don't know how to manage them for their own good. If you want your boys and girls to reach maturity with a clean slate you had better join the ranks of those few parents who have braved the derision of their children by demanding the return of the chaperone.

I am a strong believer in the honor system. I hate to think anybody has to be watched to be made remain good. There is nothing inspiring in forced virtue. But, it seems to me that in every phase of life we need some restraining influence. Professional ethics govern the conduct of doctors and lawyers. In the realm of sports, dictators have been set up to keep games wholesome and clean. In the moving picture world there is also a moral head. In business a man must either thrive by the four-square rule or fail. Once upon a time our world of pleasure was governed by the chaperone. She has now been cast aside, some people say at a very inopportune moment.

"Today only the thinnest of veneers separates decency from debauchery. Conventional dinner clothes and beautiful evening dresses plus a superficial assumption of refinement are the ingredients mixed to produce the veneer. The modern party is a caravan bound for Hell via the luxurious way-stations of the theatre, dinner-dance, the cabaret, the motor car and the roadhouse."

Such are the sweeping statements made by an observant New York clubman and bachelor who knows intimately the night life along a street called Broadway; who attends the social functions of the Four Hundred; and, who has also traveled the world over.

Has he condemned too severely? If not, what is responsible for such a sinister state of affairs when only five or ten years ago the younger generation went to respectable social gatherings without endangering their morals, without exposing themselves to obvious temptations?

I asked an old-fashioned lady this latter question, assuming for the moment that the bachelor's charges were true. Without any hesitation she answered:

"The disappearance of the chaperone is responsible for the wild modern way of enjoying life at parties and elsewhere. When the chaperone was discarded it meant vastly more than doing away with the services of a moral mentor. It heralded the fact that parents and guardians were allowing their charges to sever one strand of authority after another. No longer curbed, or restrained, youthful human nature is simply running away with itself. Now, out of control, it careens towards perdition."

Having only assumed that the bachelor's statements were true, let us investigate and ascertain if there is any need for a chaperone. If you do not know what is going on in your girl's life these days and nights its time to get wise.

It is eight o'clock in your apartment.

Marigold, your seventeen-year old darling, with bobbed, raven tresses, is waiting impatiently in the living room for the switchboard operator below to announce the arrival of her date. She is very elaborately dolled up in an evening gown that shocks your modesty. You stand the shock because you know the dear child's costume is no more daring than those of her girl friends who boast respectable and cultured parents like yourself. You look her over and wonder where in the name of Heaven she is going.

You ask her.

Vaguely she hints of a dance at some place which is more or less Greek to you. Marigold does not say anything definite. Of course there will be a gang along. (Two couples are a gang these days.)

Yes—yes—of course—There will be dancing, dining and all of that. But really, Marigold can't be bothered to explain every detail. Just as you ask who the party will consist of,—Ting-a-ling—goes the rude little telephone bell.

"Oh! There's Jack now—Night, Mother—see you tomorrow——" and Marigold, like an expensive and beautiful powder-puff, bounces out of the apartment, and down the elevator to meet Jack and go

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Philandering

If You Think the City of Brotherly

This lively yarn by Charles Duke will prove to you—maybe—that not all of the country's gayety is centered about Forty - second Street and Broadway. Who was it that said: "If I had a million dollars I would buy Philadelphia and close it up?" We forget who said it—and things have changed in Philly by this time — but it would seem to indicate that things were open there, anyway.

WHAT Eiffel Tower is to gay Par-ee; what the Goddess of Liberty (?) is to Little Old Noo Yawk; what the Washington Monument is to the American capital—William Penn and his lofty timepiece are to Philadelphia; a landmark for the unsophisticated tourist and a lodestar for the home folks.

Not long ago something went wrong with Billy Penn's pocket piece. All of a sudden the clock became a convert to the Einstein theory—no such thing as time!

"But, har! har! my dear Horatius"—I hear the hee-haw of Father Knickerbocker, "what matter such an insignificant little thing as the stopping of a clock in Philadelphia! Everybody sleeps in Philadelphia—not merely at night, but in the daytime as well. Hnaw-w-w-w! (business of the Big Snore). No one in Philly, save perhaps an itinerant traveler or two from some wakeful quarter of the globe, would notice the stoppage of Billy Penn's chronometer, especially at night. It was a Philadelphia girl who invented the fad of wearing the hair coiled over the ears! She wanted her beauty sleep unmolested by the chirp of the cricket!

"What, I prithee"—Miss Loop-the-Loop of Chicago's loop chimes in—"is Time to the sleeping village on the banks of the Delaware? A town clock all lit up like a lighthouse in Philly? Say, what's the big idea? Excess baggage. As well provide knickers for a Mack Sennett bathing girl as maintain a night-illumined town clock in Philly. Nix on that stuff. What are you trying to feed us?"

But here speaks up a friend—cultured and uncommonly pretty Miss Boston, from Boston Common by the State House.

"In the wee small hours of the night when all the world is supposed to be asleep," she suggests, "when dreams and old recollections rule, it is then that a mysterious life quickens the objects about us. Tender strains of olden memories tell us of bygone days, of laughter, of tears. In the haunting moonlight, maybe the little porcelain figures in the shops along Chestnut Street, the stone caryatides hovering over the Philadelphia Academy of Music, and the spirits of the colonial fathers down around Independence Square and the bronzed old Liberty Bell, come to life and live over again the romance of ancient days. Phantoms of dreamland in a music box revue. Do you get me, Steve? Even spirits like light."

Father Knickerbocker living next door to Father Penn is supposed to have the "low-down" on his back yard neighbor.

"Mebbe so, mebbe so," he soliloquizes. "Quakers —out at night! At three o'clock in the morning! Say!—how do you get that way? The only thing they need clocks for in Philadelphia is to keep their wrists warm."

Saying which, Father Knickerbocker winds up and calls it a night.

HOWEVER you sister cities, come closer while we engage in a little family game of confidences. You should be wise to the fact this is a day of things what ain't. Ain't what they're supposed to be. Yonder parcel in the hands of a grim-visaged shopper is supposed to be an innocent box of bonbons for friend wife when, to be perfectly frank about it—well, the banana boats are running pretty regularly these days to tropical ports.

What happened in Philly when ye olde towne clock went on strike was this: the minute Billy Penn's pocket potato laid down on the job things began to happen. Whirr-r-r-r! Br-r-r-r-r! Ting-a-ling-ling! Telephones began ringing up in the electrical bureau in City Hall where employes of the Department of Public Safety are on the job night and day, supposedly guarding the common peepul, in Quakertown.

"Your old towne clock is taking the rest cure! Man on third can't find the way home! Please tell us whether its supper or breakfast time!" the complaints began pouring into headquarters. On the level, not one, but many were noting the hiatus in the functions of aforesaid mentioned clock. Think of it, a whole heap of folks still out of bed in Philadelphia at three o'clock in the morning!

But vigilant minute-men had beat them to it—beating time, as it t'were. A minute or less after the strikeless old towne clock went on strike, Joe Gaskill and George McDevitt, night City Hall guards, missed the tick-tock, or whatever it is they hear in their night-long vigil in the tower high over the tranquil city. Parking their pinochle cards they went to investigate.

It didn't take Joe very long to find out what was the trouble. A crank shaft connecting with the automatic air-supply that keeps the clock hands in motion had broken off short, leaving the ancient timepiece as helpless as a titled Englishwoman in a sheik's desert.

"Won't do to let old four-face die down," wailed Joe. "Think of the many people without the time o' night. Night-hawks training their periscopes on Billy Penn. Two million folks gettin' up without the time o' day. And this daylight-savin' mess, too."

Thereupon Joe and George started to wind the clock by hand. From three o'clock in the morning until broad daylight the two guards worked in relays—just like the Hollandaise urchin who stuck his finger in the Dutch dike and held it there all night to thwart a flood.

When morning came, and with it relief guards, Joe and George were still at it, grinding away like galley slaves. Save for the three o'clock waltzers who had witnessed the old clock skip a few heart beats and then as mysteriously make them up, the sleeping City of Brotherly Love was none the wiser for the mishap to their pet timepiece. When seven o'clock union whistles blew, workmen turned up with a new crank-shaft, and ye olde-fashioned towne clock started anew patrolling its beat.

NOW, therefore, be it resolved, brothers and sisters of the night watch, this story of the old clock that turned dead-beat for the nonce down in dear old Philly, is noteworthy for two very specific reasons.

First of all, there are still a lot of folks in Philadelphia who wear their pajamas in the daytime, contrary opinion notwithstanding.

Secondly, when fool faddists insist on stopping the clocks, there are always some Joe Gaskills and George McDevitts to step into the breach and keep things going—or flowing. Keeping in mind those banana boats from the Bahamas, the Scotch schooner skippers, et. al., etc.

Even in this superlative age when the "blue" laws—blue Monday boys and girls—are making so many people see red; in this heyday of the prohibitionists, the inhibitionists and all the other demnitionists; in this era of the self-appointed millenium-seekers, the Utopian dreamers and the meticulous watchdogs of the public morals, who would clean up everything in sight save the warts on their own necks—staid folks are still astir after midnight in the so-called City of Somnolence, on the banks of the Delaware, looking for beacon lights and familiar landmarks with which to steer a journey homeward in the early morning hours.

What's that? Now listen, old thing; disabuse yourself of the illusion these perambulating prowlers in Philly are mere wielders of the Ingersoll—white wings currying the streets, yeggmen and morning newspaper reporters. (You ought to get some Quaker taxi Jehu to let you read his log.) In a little midnight meander through the purlieus of Philly one is likely to be rubbing shoulders with some distinguished citizen of the commonwealth of Pennsylvania or the municipality of Philadelphia. In Chinatown, in the Ghetto restaurants, in any

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Philadelphia

Love Sleeps all the time—Read This!

one of the Broad street cabaret gardens, or in one of the many roadhouses that now dot the suburban map in every direction—you'd be surprised. Everybody's doing it. Jazz. High jinks.

Just think of it—the erudite Director of Public Health and Charities in the cabinet of Philadelphia's mayor admonished the good people of Slowtown not so long ago they would have to cut down on the pace they were traveling or disaster—grim, stark, early death—stared them in the face.

Paint and powder. Dance and dine. Hooch and hilarity. Kisses with a "kick" in them. Monkey glands to bolster up fast-fading vitality. Drugs to allay headaches "the morning after"—and then off again in search of another round of new and more startling sensations.

Giddy grandmothers trying to be flippant young flappers. Frivolous fathers and mothers turning backward the hands of the clock against all the laws of nature. Little children leaping overnight from adolescence to maturity in the super-heated whirl of the modern social wheel—youth and age paradoxically seeking to exchange places.

Bob-haired, short-skirted girls saturated in cigarette smoke. Sleek-haired, pasty-faced lounge lizards toting death-dealing hip pocket flasks. Young married women philandering from one secret flirtation to another. Husbands and fathers maintaining clandestine menages for mistresses who bear them children born out of wedlock. Grandmas and grandpas who ought to be at home in bed, toddling and shimmying at three o'clock in the morning.

Boys and girls fed up night and day with erotic love scenes pictured on the silver screen. Whirling away in midnight motors to the hidden tryst and the petting party. Rearing and tearing from one soiree to another in one continual round of pleasurable pursuits—dash, flash, crash—and then smash!

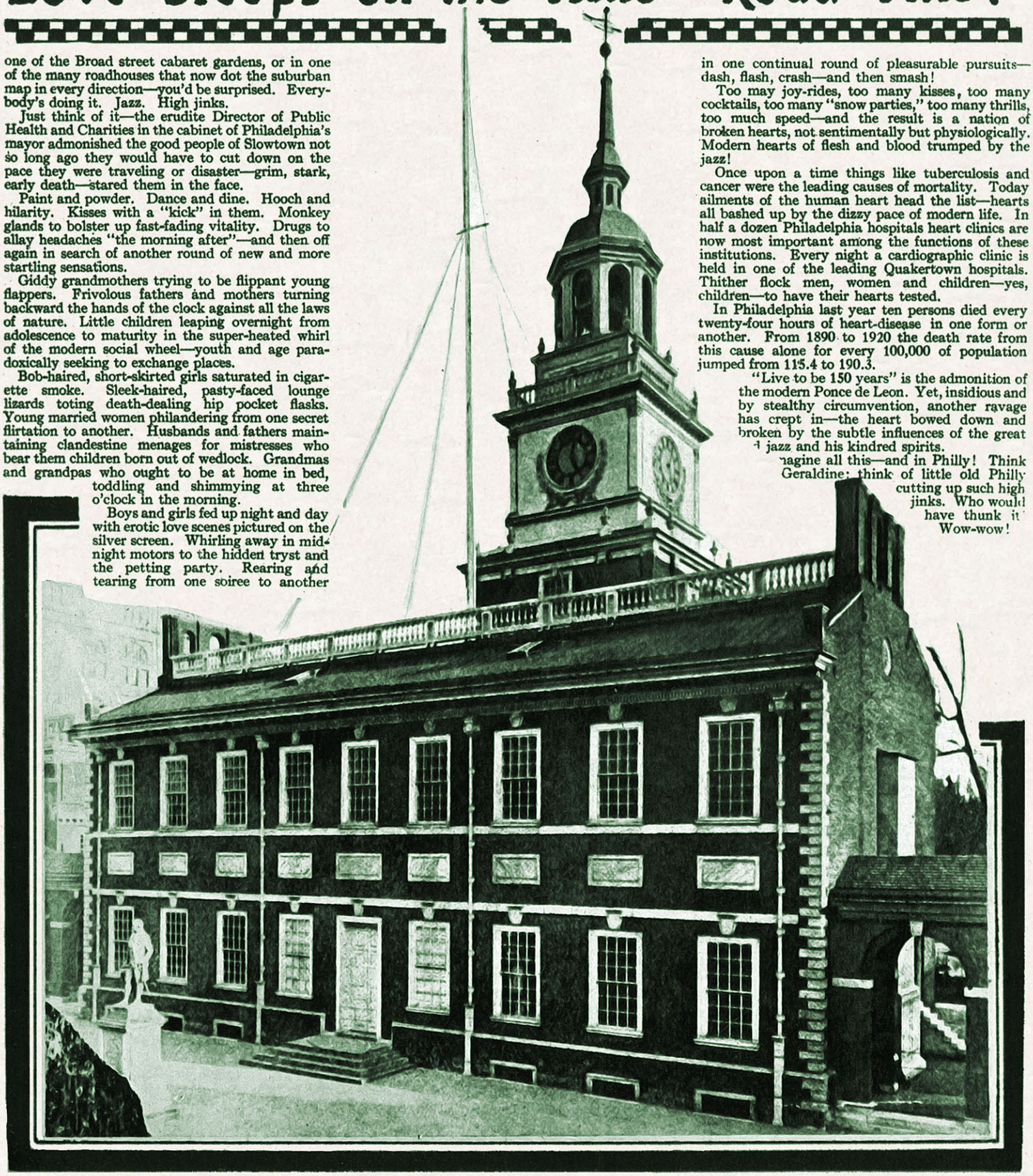
Too may joy-rides, too many kisses, too many cocktails, too many "snow parties," too many thrills, too much speed—and the result is a nation of broken hearts, not sentimentally but physiologically. Modern hearts of flesh and blood trumped by the jazz!

Once upon a time things like tuberculosis and cancer were the leading causes of mortality. Today ailments of the human heart head the list—hearts all bashed up by the dizzy pace of modern life. In half a dozen Philadelphia hospitals heart clinics are now most important among the functions of these institutions. Every night a cardiographic clinic is held in one of the leading Quakertown hospitals. Thither flock men, women and children—yes, children—to have their hearts tested.

In Philadelphia last year ten persons died every twenty-four hours of heart-disease in one form or another. From 1890 to 1920 the death rate from this cause alone for every 100,000 of population jumped from 115.4 to 190.3.

"Live to be 150 years" is the admonition of the modern Ponce de Leon. Yet, insidious and by stealthy circumvention, another ravage has crept in—the heart bowed down and broken by the subtle influences of the great ...d jazz and his kindred spirits.

...agine all this—and in Philly! Think Geraldine; think of little old Philly cutting up such high jinks. Who would have thunk it! Wow-wow!



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It's an old saying that appearances are deceitful. You never would suppose from surface indications one might have such a jazzy career in Philly, would you? To the novitiate, a Sunday in Philadelphia is supposed to be as cheerful as old man Scrooge at a Hollywood birthday party. Shops all closed. Restaurants barricaded. Hotel roof-gardens as gloomy as the morgue. Broad and Chestnut streets steeped in the sleep of innocuous desuetude.

Remember the old Continental Hotel at Ninth and Chestnut Streets opposite the Post-office where presidents and titled royalty once were entertained in all lavish hospitality? Remember the old Colonnade up at Fifteenth Street just across from Jack O'Brien's fistiana hold-forth? Remember Soula's cafe and the ribald old Rathskeller that used to hold forth in the cellar of the Betz building just across from City Hall?

All gone now. Vanished as completely as the Kaiser's dream of "der tag" in Paris. Staid old skyscrapers in their places. Business blocks. Broad and Chestnut Street cafes all closed up by one o'clock in the morning. Music stops at half after twelve. No place to go. Nothing to do. Back to the hotel. Woe is me! Gee, what a mortuary is Philly!

Ah! but wait. Just a moment, old dear! You ain't seen nothing yet. Stick around a little bit. Rustle up an old friend. Tell him you want to hit the high spots—if there are any.

You see, Philly is a sort of a closed corporation affair. You have to be in on the know. Blue stocking stuff. Keeping up a front. The old conservativism of the colonial fathers. Bluff! Why, say, the *savor faire* of a Broadway press agent is as mild as a drink of buttermilk compared to the bluff of the modern Billy Penn.

It's a mask, carefully cultivated, studiously posed. This Quaker maiden is a dainty, demure little thing, shy as a fawn, gentle as a dove—to the naked eye. But in the dark of the evening, when Billy Penn's clock is all lit up on his dizzy pedestal—watch your step!

Ten chances to one, under her Quaker garb she's wearing the niftiest kind of a silk one-piece bathing suit. Easy to dance in early in the evening when one goes sedately to the Ritz or the Bellevue for supper. Cool and comfortable for a dash out into the open country by motor. No corsets or other useless impediments.

She's all ready for the climax of the night's roundelay. First the Ritz or the Arcadia for a little of the sedate "front" stuff. Next a ride to cool off. Then the Green Dragon, the Purple Cow or the Pepper Pot for a little of the cabaret jamboree. Finally, nothing but the silken bathing suit and—a swim de luxe around 4 a. m. in some private pool, topped off with a ripping breakfast of hot cakes and sausages.

Ah! the private bathing pool! The latest thing in Philadelphia night life. Athletic stuff. Bill Tilden. Lew Tendler. The rah-rah boys at Penn. It's fashionable to be athletic. Nothing like a swim to wind up a regular party. It's really remarkable, once one sits down to make a census of them, how many of these private swimming pools are to be found. Private homes out the Main Line. Germantown and Mt. Airy, Bryn Mawr and Devon. Some of them out in the open air. Most of them tucked away indoors in a quiet retreat.

You see, what's happened in Philadelphia is they have closed out the center of the city in mock respectability and moved all the fireworks out into the suburbs. If you want a night out and a bit of subrosa hilarity in Quakerville you will hardly find it in the hub of the city, although there are splotches of bohemianism to be found in sporadic jumps here, there and everywhere within a stone's throw of City Hall.

But the real party life is to be found out in the hidden nooks and furtive recesses of the suburban belts. That's why they put the City Hall clock up so high—so's folks could have some guiding star with which to guide their faded steps homeward after the hectic night. Like mushrooms, and grown with equal rapidity, roadhouses have sprouted in profusion on all the highways and byways leading out from the city. Here you get—well, what makes for a night of happiness, old dear?

And those mild-eyed Quaker maidens! Not so long ago a Main Line magistrate and his constable out in Haverford township took it into their heads to break up the game of parking cars along the hidden nooks of little used roadways, turning down the lights—and—er—well, you've heard of such a thing as the petting party. An evening when the autumn air has the tang of wine to it. A spin out in the country. A stalled motor. Lights out. Just a little love—a little kiss. All alone——

Then—a flashlight! A gruff voice out of the darkness. "Come along to the station house." Pleas for mercy. Bribes; if sizable enough—snapped up in a hurry. But no chicken feed. Tears. Jeers. Oaths. But in the end—the station house and a big fine. Just for spooning on a public highway instead of a private parlor, a backyard swing, or a rooming-house vestibule!

IT worked for a time. The judge and constable were growing rich. Many of their victims were married men—or married women—and other husband's wives—or other wives' husbands. Couldn't let it go to a showdown. Notoriety. Scandal. Must keep up the cloak of mock respectability.

Eventually the Quaker maidens put the boots to the judge and his evil consort. Refused to be awed, cowed, bluffed. Stood right up and faced the music. Why should it matter whether a girl preferred to kiss her sweetheart right out in the middle of a country road instead of back home in the sequestered stillness of the side porch? What right had a suburban magistrate to butt in on the affaires d'amour of a motoring Romeo and Juliet? Blue laws for pink lips! Voila! Allons!

In the end the Quaker maidens won out. One of the newspapers got onto the trail of the petting party magistrate and rendered him hors du combat in short order. Looked him up in England where he came from and got the goods on him. Usually these Don Quixotes have a "past." This one had a dandy. So they deposed him.

Now, on any autumnal night, you can count a half dozen parked motor-cars in a hundred-yard-dash along any desirable suburban road. No more flashlights. No more notoriety. Gee, ain't love grand!

Yep, you can have a good time in Philly—if you know where and how to get it. You need the magic password and the willing guide—only. If you want a drink you can get it in City Hall—if you know the combination. If you incline to the quiet little game with high stakes—shucks, that's easier yet. If you want the violet rays of the rainbow corners, ask any taxi driver. Courtesy is his watchword. He aims to please. He carries a little date book.

Some folks still think of Philadelphia as a drowsy village. Huh!—if that's the case, there's a lot of Quakers who walk in their sleep. And, believe you us, there are a lot of 'em who wear their pajamas in the daytime.

Thank heaven, in these "anti" days, for the Joe Gaskills and the George McDevitts! What would we do without 'em?

Out of the Night

(*Continued on page* 8)

face was almost more than he could resist.

"Yes, dear," he said softly, taking both her hands in his. "It is necessary."

He told her the financial trouble Carrington & Richards was in—a straightforward narrative in which he glossed over nothing and held nothing back. He spoke to her as man to man.

"And if I don't get old man Phillips to come across—Carrington & Richards will just be plumb out of luck, and that's all there is to it," he finished.

"You must go, then," she said.

"But the money—I don't like to leave you here alone with it—and yet I can't take it with me through those lonely, deserted mountain roads. If I had thought about it in time, I would have got Carrington to take care of it—but he had gone. And I had forgotten that Hannah wouldn't be here tonight." He frowned at the handbag.

"I am not afraid," she said simply.

"I'll be home between one and two o'clock," he said. Perhaps you can get the Simmons' to stay with you, or——"

"No, it's too bad a night to try to get anybody out of the house. I shall not be frightened. Does anybody know the money is here?"

"Not directly, I guess," he said slowly, "though I imagine a lot of people guess it usually is. You see," he explained, "I always pay the men the first thing Saturday morning."

"Suppose I hide it," she said hopefully.

"That's a good idea," he brightened. "We'll dope out a place while we eat."

It was a bright, cheery meal for all that, and he was quite cheerful again when they were through. They had decided to put the money in the butler's pantry, as being a place that would hardly be suspected. She locked the door of the pantry and put the key in her bosom.

WHEN he left, it was with a promise to return by one, if possible. Certainly not later than two. He made her promise not to permit anyone to enter. A great swirl of wind and snow blew into the house as he opened the door to go out—the storm was in full blast. She closed the door quickly, and bolted it.

She busied herself washing up the dishes and tidying the dining room and kitchen, trying in her industry to forget the fact that she was alone in the house with a large sum of money, but the thought would not down.

It was after nine when she finished her work. The storm had increased until the world outside was nothing but a maelstrom of snow. She sat down before the great fire in the living room and tried to pretend to herself that nothing out of the ordinary was occurring—as though it was an everyday affair for her to be left alone, isolated, with a large sum of money; she did not succeed very well, however, in spite of the fact that she had told her husband she would not be afraid. She had not wanted to burden him with her petty fears at such a time, when it was a matter of life or death for his firm.

The wind trailed off the corners of the house like the sound of a lost soul in eternal darkness. In spite of the warmth of the room, she shivered.

"I never would have believed I would be such a coward," she murmured. Silence again for a time.

The living room, in which she sat, the dining room and kitchen were the only rooms on the ground floor. There was a small side entrance to the house, leading out of the small hall that ran into the kitchen. In contradistinction to the brightness of the grate, the rest of the house looked dark and dismal, especially the door of this side entry, except for the high light that glowed and leaped on the polished porcelain knob.

As she sat lost in thought, a slight sound came to her from this entrance. (She started suddenly, and stiffened to attention, every faculty strained. Slowly she could see the knob turning—there was another sound, the sound of a push. The door held. There were a few moments of silent terror for her.) Conquering her fears, she arose and walked to the door.

"Who is there!" she demanded. There was no answer except the howl of the storm. No further sound came from the door, and after awhile she thought it had probably been her overwrought nerves. She sat down again by the fire. Suddenly there was the sound of a strong, vigorous knock on the front door.

(*Continued on page* 18)

Next week is the end of the "Thrill" Contest Your chance for a prize is as good as anyone's. Send your MIDNIGHT THRILL in now!

Have you sent in your ending to "How I Entertained My Small Town Sweetheart in New York?" Your ingenuity may win a prize for you

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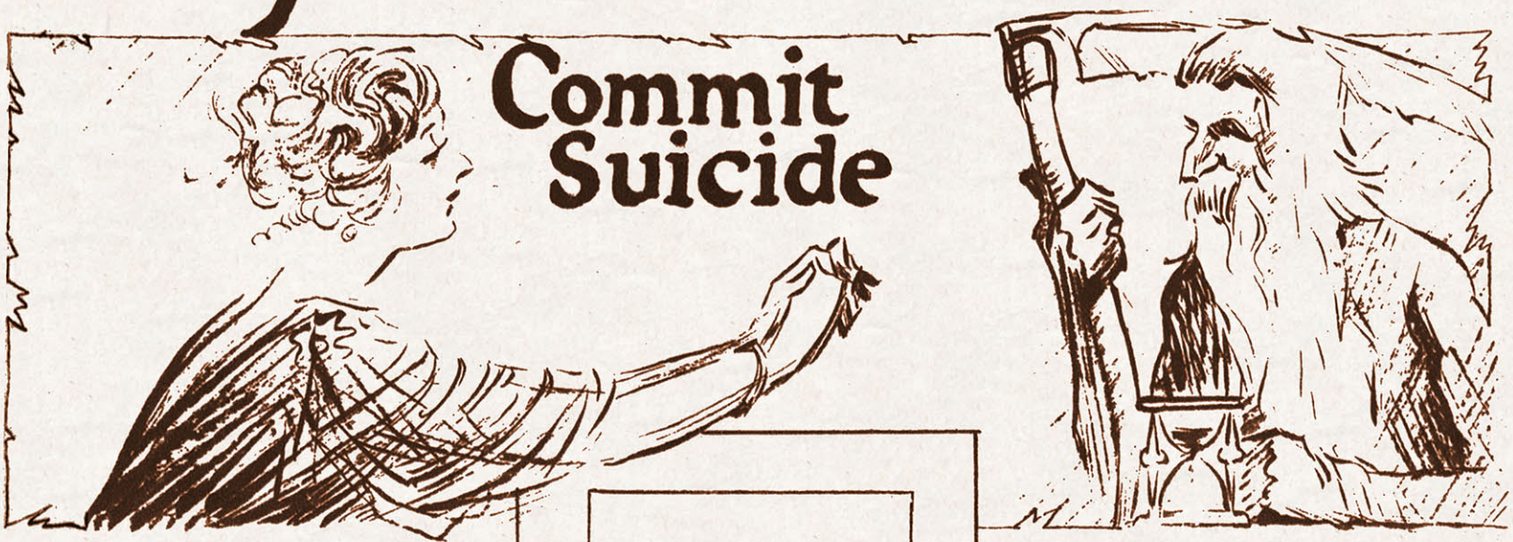
Why Beautiful Women Commit Suicide



It has always been said that "Death loves a shining mark." This writer analyzes suicide from a point of view that must have occurred to everyone who reads the news these days. His reasoning is interesting and you will find his conclusions sound. Suicide is always a deplorable thing, and in many cases a blot on our civilization. But beauty and death seem to be so far apart in life that it seems strange they should find a communion in death.

I SHALL never forget the horror with which I learned of an accident that swept to death five young people of our town. It was an inexcusable grade-crossing murder. It was winter time, the ground was snow-covered, and two sleighloads of laughing boys and girls had gone from our place to Nyack to attend a dance. They were coming back singing, after midnight—and as they reached the West Nyack crossing an express train ploughed through them.

Many of the bodies were terribly mangled. But one, the prettiest girl in the party, was caught up by the cowcatcher and carried there, almost unscarred, till the train could be brought to a stop.

I have never been able to get that picture out of my mind. The whole tragedy left scars in my memory. But of all the hideous recollections of that night, and the morning which followed, this stands out the sharpest—that beautiful body, that lovely face, still, pulseless, lightless, carried forward on the cold, cruel iron of the roaring train.

I hadn't known the girl well, but her beauty had been an ornament to the town. The whole business was terrible, to the uttermost; but why she? She with that rare and tender beauty?

Perhaps Death thought he had made all the concession that could be asked when he had left her face untouched, so that her mother and her friends could have glimpses of it, all set in flowers, for the three or four days until they must put it away in the frozen ground.

I have been thinking of her again because once more Death and Beauty have happened to be near together. And again I feel that sullen bitterness against the Reaper who covets the fair flowers.

I had an appointment with a chorus girl to put the finishing touches on her life story which I was writing. I was idly watching the girls at an afternoon rehearsal.

I had noticed one girl, tall and pretty, who had, I was told, just been promoted from the chorus. She tripped on and off the stage. She sat down with the other principals while the chorus went through their steps and their notes. She came down now and then to talk with some friend seated in the dim house. She took her turn at the water cooler and laughed with everybody. And once, near the close, just for fun, she resumed her old place in the chorus, standing in front of the girl who had taken her position. She sang the old songs, tripped the old steps, laughed her happy laugh, while the girl behind her, with arms about her waist, kept time and tune. A frank, merry, bright, laughing face she had—and when I learned her name I could not help saying—"Why of course, that would have to be her name. She could not be anything but Gay." Lillian Gay, nineteen years old.

Two or three days later, coming up the theatre elevator to the manager's office, they told me she was dead. She had taken poison during morning rehearsal.

Why had she done it? No one can tell. All sorts of stories. A lover's quarrel, most likely. Or perhaps she had no idea that what she drank was so deadly.

But Death got her! He added another fair trophy to his infinite list.

There might seem to be some reason for Death's desire for Beauty, but why should Beauty desire Death?

In less than two weeks two other beautiful girls in the comparatively narrow limits of Manhattan have tried to die. Beauty yearning for Death. Can anything be stranger than that?

ANOTHER similar case came to my attention some time ago. That case was so strange and inexplicable that I may not write about it. In fact I promised I would not. I found the girl's home right enough. The girl was not in. But they showed me her little room, her bed—dainty bits of clothing lying about, her hat on the closet door.

And I sat for an hour in the plainly furnished dining room talking with her girl friend about the strange turmoil of the great city's life, and how despair and pain and Death lurk about its streets.

A young girl, discouraged, recently took a supposedly fatal dose, but accidentally set fire to the bed-clothes. Rescuers found her and hurried her to the hospital in time to save her life.

This case, like the others, is full of unsolvable mysteries. The first statements of the girl were denied later. Her diary got into the hands of a newspaper and while other papers were telling that the mother and her friends were making desperate efforts to get the diary back into their possession, the first paper appeared with the whole dreadful story, taken from the white pages of her little book, telling of struggle against disappointment, perplexity, and worst of all, with the drug habit which she seemed powerless to break.

Mother and friends were at her bedside—too late to save her from distasteful publicity, but not too late to demonstrate their love, and to take her back home, away from the tangled web woven by the streets of New York, lit by its glare, shadowed by its gloom, ready to snare the weak and unwary to ruin.

But for our question, why Beauty seeks Death, perhaps we can find some answers.

Beauty, I suppose, is almost always conscious of itself. Ugly folk can't understand that. It is thoroughly impossible for me, for instance, an old man, to fancy how a beautiful young woman thinks and what her sensations are. Yet I know that she must be conscious of her beauty, conscious that she is different from the commonplace, conscious that others are observing her and thrilled by the sight of her.

This puts beautiful women in a class by themselves. They cannot think and feel as others do. Conscious of awakening sensations of pleasure in others, they are apt to centre their own thoughts, I suppose, on pleasure. They are tempted to experiment with sensations. Beauty and Pleasure seem to belong together. Beautiful creatures ought to be happy, one reasons. All of us feel that. But a woman who knows she is beautiful must have that conviction more deeply set. She is giving happiness to the world; the world owes her happiness. And she will get it.

But that's a sad and usually a bitter business—seeking merely happiness. The pleasure world has its choicest charms for busy people. We all need pleasure. There is no harm in joy. I once heard a famous psychologist say that he never knew of happiness harming anyone. That's all right. Real happiness. But Happiness is a master hand at playing tag. And she's hard to catch.

So the pretty girl, out on that game, chasing the phantom happiness through the lights and shadows, finds she can't grasp the elusive thing.

It's different with those whose work is to give pleasure to others. That's what the girls on the stage do. They are happy, not so much because they enjoy their work but because of the thrill they get back from those whom they are entertaining.

(*Continued on page* 30)

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Who Has the Best Knee
that's B

Sonia Field
and Lillo Bay
Solly - Irene - Mary

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Out of The Night

(*Continued from page* 14)

Really frightened now, she stepped to the door. She was not surprised—she had known all along somebody would come, though she had tried to pretend to herself that nobody would. And here he was outside. And she knew he would come in, whether she let him in or not.

"Who is there?" she demanded again. She pushed aside part of the curtain that covered the glass of the door and looked out, her heart pounding furiously the while. In the snow light she could make out the dim, indistinct figure of a man.

"I am lost and frozen," came to her straining ears. "Let me in."

"I cannot," she answered above the shrieking wind.

"Then I will die on your doorstep," he made reply. "Or break in the door. I can't go a step further."

THERE was silence.

She considered quickly. Much as she was afraid of this night visitor, she was just as much in terror when he was outside as when he was in. If he knew about the money he would certainly carry out his word and break in the door—and if he didn't know . . . it was cosy and warm inside, and she could not bear the thought of leaving a fellow human to perish.

She opened the door and stood on the threshold, barring the way. The man turned his face to her. He was huge, and his face was covered by a stubbly growth of black beard in the midst of which his eyes glowed sinisterly. She beckoned him in. She barred the door again behind him as he made his way into the living room and stood before the grateful warmth of the blaze. He was covered with a fine, sifted snow, and tiny points of ice gleamed on his beard, which was matted and unkempt, but he addressed her politely enough and with a surprisingly educated inflection to his voice that belied his clothes, which were ragged and dirty.

"It's a bad night, madam," he said when he had thawed out a bit. His eyes passed over her face and to the comfortable appointments of the warm living room.

"What do you want?" she asked.

"Nothing—now," he answered. "I wanted to get in out of the storm. I am in," he chuckled, and the blood ran cold in her. She watched him in silence as he took off his tattered coat and sank into a chair before the fire.

"Mmn! But it's warm here!" he cried. "Look's as if I'll have to stay here all night." She shrank back, and he glanced slyly at her white face and trembling little form. "Can't go out in that." He motioned with his head to the window. "All alone?"

She struggled for a moment in her mind as to whether to admit it or not. He noted her hesitation, and it was sufficient answer for him.

"Never mind, madam," he added. "You'll be all right—we'll be comfortable here."

"I expect my husband home at any moment," she hastened to put in.

"That's all right," the man guffawed gruffly. "I'll take care of you if he doesn't come soon."

She shrank back at the sound of his voice.

"If you could get me a cup of tea, say," he suggested tentatively, "to melt some of the ice in my blood."

She left him sitting before the fire and busied herself getting the tea. When she returned he was sitting in the same position as when she had gone. He drained the hot cup at a draught, and sighed gratefully.

"Thank you," he said, and handed it back to her.

"Listen to that wind," he said. "But it's very nice in here—for us two!" Her heart was racing as she sat down on the opposite side. The question in her mind was whether he knew of the money or not. Whether he was just an unfortunate wayfarer blown in here by winds of chance, or whether a fell design actuated his presence.

She arose and moved to the window. The raging storm blotted out the landscape—there was nothing to be seen. Trembling, she permitted the shade to drop back again. A pall had settled over the world.

"I'm sorry, madam," the visitor said. "I think I'll have to stay here." He glanced at the divan. "If you don't mind——" he suggested.

She nodded mechanically.

HE removed his wet, soggy shoes, and placed them in front of the grate. Then, without further ado, he stretched himself out on the divan.

"Good night, madam," he suggested from its soft recess. "Pleasant dreams." It seemed a suggestion to her that she had better retire.

And why not? she thought. There was nothing she could do here, and in her heart was an uncontrolable desire to rush to her bedroom and bolt the door, as a barrier between her and this polite but sinister thing that had come in out of the night.

"Good night," she said.

The storm abated suddenly, and the night became very still. She went to the dresser in her bedroom—she remembered suddenly that there was a revolver in the top drawer. She had never touched it before—had been afraid of it. But it would be a tower of strength to her now. She opened the drawer and found it empty.

Her husband had taken it, she decided quickly. He might need it over the lonely mountain roads he had to travel. Suddenly her eye fell on the telephone box in the corner. A great wave of hope surged up in her—she had completely forgotten about it.

She threw open her door and listened at the head of the stairs. There was no sound. Softly she closed the door and crossed to the telephone.

"His thick fingers tightened on her throat and she could hardly breathe. His leering, sensual lips came closer and closer. . . . There was a splintering of glass. . . . . A flash, and the spiteful bark of an automatic that filled the room full of its acrid gas. . . . ."

Suspense! Action! Surprise!

She felt stronger already as her fingers closed on the receiver. She could call up the local police and—but her hopes were dashed to the ground as suddenly as they had surged up in her.

The wires were down.

She knew that's what it must be—the receiver was a dead thing in her almost dead fingers and the hook on which it hung had given forth that dull, lifeless click that she knew could only mean that the telephone was out of order. The wires must have gone down in the storm.

She sat on her bed mechanically, and terror, with its icy fingers, reached out and gripped her heart. Her hearing seemed to become abnormally keen. Even up here she could hear the log fire in the living room creaking and shifting on its uneven bed. The clock on the dresser ticked thunderously, and the springs of the bed creaked as she sat there. All these small home sounds accentuated the tremendous silence without.

How long Wilma sat there she never knew—her senses were almost numbed and time did not matter, nor was she conscious of its passing.

The small sounds of the house served but to make the greater silence the more real and oppressive. Suddenly, in the midst of them, a real sound fell upon her ear; very low it was, but different from the others in quality—a small, purposeful, stealthy sound.

She listened without moving—indeed, it seemed as if she would never be able to move again, her flesh was so cold with terror and inaction. Suddenly she heard it again. It was small, as of things being moved softly. It continued. There was a door being tried. Then it stopped. Was it her fancy only—the result of an overwrought imagination that was almost insane in its fear? No, it had started again. She knew now what it was.

It was the man downstairs!

With an effort she arose and threw open her door softly. From the head of the stairs she heard him moving about distinctly.

Impelled irresistibly by she knew not what, she moved down the stairs silently. She could hear him very plainly now moving about the living room. Indeed, there was no attempt at silence on his part any longer. He evidently realized that haste was a necessity and he was proceeding rapidly and noisily with his search.

HIS back was to her as she stood trembling at the door of the living room. Her husband's desk was in that room. It was open and the contents were scattered over the room. So were the contents of the drawers of the dresser that stood there. He was still now, looking about the room to see whether he had overlooked any possibility.

Turning, he saw her in the doorway. His countenance was changed now. There was in his sinister and desperate face no attempt at insinuation, only a dreadful resolve that froze her blood as she looked. His piggish, blood-red eyes gleamed horribly through the surrounding hair.

"Where is it?" he demanded, advancing to her threateningly. She retreated a step or two, her knees nearly giving way beneath her, but he grasped her hands.

"Where is what?" she faltered.

"Don't fence with me, damn it," he growled, "you know what I want. And I want it in a hurry, or it will be the worse for you. There's five thousand dollars here in this house, and I'm going to get it. You've hidden it—where?" He twisted her hands until she shrieked with the pain of it.

Unwillingly, scarcely knowing what she did beneath the pain and shock, she glanced quickly at the door of the pantry in the corridor towards the kitchen. Quick as she was, he caught the look. He flung her aside.

"So that's it," he said shortly. With a beast-like leap he was at the door, turning the knob in his powerful hands. The door resisted. He shook it, but it was a stout door, and would have required plenty of breaking in. He recognized this at a glance.

He came back to her.

"Where is the key?" he said shortly. "Quick, I must have it!"

"I don't know," she said.

His hands were at her throat now and everything seemed to go black before her eyes.

"The key!" he shouted hoarsely, above the storm. "The key!"

Her lips moved to speak, but the words would not come. It was as a horrible dream. His thick fingers tightened on her throat and now she could hardly breathe. His leering, sensual lip came closer and closer.

Suddenly, as though a part of the same dream, or rather nightmare, there was a splintering of glass. His brutal fingers released her throat and she sank to the rug. He turned instantly to the intruder, but it was too late.

There was a flash and the spiteful bark of an automatic that filled the room full of its acrid gas. Stupidly he gazed at the entrance for a moment, his eyes unseeing and glazed. Slowly, then, he sank into a grotesque heap and a small trickle of something red ran from underneath his coat.

Through the shattered glass of the hall door a hand was inserted, opening the door from within. Dick Richards burst in.

He picked his wife up from the floor, where she was already recovering consciousness.

(*Continued on page* 22)

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Nature vs. the Moral Laws

By T. HOWARD KELLY

I AM writing this article against the wishes and advice of a prominent Catholic priest, a well-known Protestant bishop and an eminent Jewish rabbi. When approached by me on the subject which I shall discuss here, all three of these religious leaders were shocked by my opinion that Nature is against the moral laws.

"It is blasphemy!" cried the Catholic priest.

"God is not antagonistic to virtue," said the Protestant divine.

"Spiritual bolshevism," declared the Rabbi.

I gave these three sect shepherds my reasons for believing that Nature has always been in revolt against what we term the moral laws. In so doing I promised that if they could be disproved by any logic or reasoning I would refrain from making them public. At the end of a week I called upon the three clergymen. Each one admitted that it was impossible for him to disprove my viewpoints, but begged me to keep my ideas to myself. They said the masses should not be taught to believe that Nature is against the moral laws.

"That would weaken the effect of these laws. Our moral laws must be kept strong," warned the priest. The other two clergymen were both emphatic in their belief that it would be pouring oil on fire to discuss the subject in print. But, I am of the opinion that if a thing is TRUE it should be discussed. A scheme of life, builded upon a foundation of evasions and untruths, will not last forever. It is better to know the worst now and prepare against such possibilities than to go along smug and secure in a fallacious theory.

* * * * *

Nature is not moral.

To get down to sheer realities Nature is nothing more than a series of mental and physical impulses which have two great primal and fundamental objectives.

Self-preservation is the first great impulse.

The perpetuation of life is the next vital impulse.

All others are merely incidental to these two.

All humans struggle for the necessary crust of bread. The struggle is made worth-while because of our inherent desire to mate and have children who will carry on after we have passed away. Nature preserves and propagates by the powerful instinct to reproduce its various species of life. This instinct, as in the sexual phase of flower, vegetable, animal and human life, is a blind impulse with but one aim.

In the days of primitive man there were only sheer, natural impulses to guide him. There were no moral laws. After all, moral laws are merely human inventions designed to curb Nature's impulses. Consequently, for many centuries, as man pushed his way towards the light of a higher civilization Nature held sway, unimpeded by moral laws. Upon their invention the workings and impulses of Nature suddenly found themselves damned up. And, like a great tempestuous river lashing against cement walls, Nature began her fight against moral laws which are barriers to her two primal objectives.

The simple proof of Nature's antagonism to moral laws is to be found in the ages-old fact that everybody finds it hard to be "good." Religious teachers would have us think our evil temptations come from a cloven-footed devil. That is very impressive allegory. It has a certain desired effect. But, not being truth, it falls short of its purpose. If the devil is half as wise as we believe him to be, he is not wasting his time on us humans whose very nature impels us to break the moral laws.

All of this does not sound like blasphemy or spiritual bolshevism to me. Most men know in a sort of subconscious way that Nature is not moral. They have experienced how difficult it is to walk the straight and narrow path invented for the alleged good of society.

IS NATURE MORAL?

Isn't it a fact that nature and morals have absolutely nothing to do with each other? The author of this penetrating article says:

"Nature is nothing more than a series of mental and physical impulses which have two great primal and fundamental objectives.

"Self preservation is the first great impulse.

"The perpetuation of life is the next vital impulse.

"All others are merely incidental to these two.

"After all, moral laws are merely human inventions designed to curb Nature's impulses. . . . Like a great tempestuous river lashing against cement walls, Nature began her fight against moral laws which are barriers to her two primal objectives."

But my clerical friends say that most people look upon Nature as the greatest evidence of God. If Nature is not moral, they say, the masses will conclude God is not moral, either. I retorted we could explain to the masses that such is not a logical conclusion. And, further, I stated we could emphatically indicate a logical conclusion. But the ministers still begged me not to bring this subject into print. They were afraid to take a chance with what they all termed "so dangerous a truth."

First of all I want to clear myself of any possible charge of blasphemy and spiritual bolshevism. I do not like the sound, or the significance, of either charge. I have that kind of spiritual faith which tells me there is a Supreme Being who loves virtue and hates vice. I have no desire to create the truly blasphemous conclusion that because Nature is in constant revolt against the moral laws God is to be looked upon as a two-faced Deity who, in one breath, infuses into our beings immoral impulses, and in the next commands us to curb those impulses and live according to a code of strict morals.

Frankly, I believe God and Nature are two distinct substances. I do not believe Nature is God. Therefore, in attributing to Nature an antagonistic attitude toward what present-day man conceives as a moral code, I do not incriminate or involve God.

"God," said the Protestant clergyman, "is responsible for Nature. He is the Author of Nature, the Creator. To state that His handiwork is a collection of forces in revolt against His creatures' moral codes is to accuse God of being responsible for the occasion of what is known as sin."

It took me only a few moments to give my answer to the Bishop's argument.

"God created man in His own image and with a free will," I said.

The Protestant leader admitted my statement.

"All right," I answered; "Man is the greatest handiwork of God, and yet he has been sinning, as we say, ever since the institution of moral codes."

The bishop was silent.

Why?

Because he did not want to say God is guilty of having created a creature who, because he is endowed with a free will, may be virtuous or sinful as he desires. And yet, he had said as much in admitting man to be the greatest handiwork of God and

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My Greatest Midnight Thrill!

These thrills are entered in the great MIDNIGHT Thrill Contest for $500.00 in prizes. See page 2 this issue

THE FLAMING HAND

I HAD retired early, for fraternity initiation was scheduled for the following night and I knew that sleep would not come my way then. I fell asleep immediately; so quickly, in fact, as to make me believe that some drug must have been administered to me earlier in the evening. How long I slept I do not know, but I awoke with a start. Without opening my eyes,I tried to divine the cause of my abrupt awakening. I was suddenly startled by a queer wailing sound which came, seemingly, from under my bed. I sat up quickly, and as I opened my eyes I was confronted with the strangest and most horrifying sight I have ever laid eyes on!

On the wall, directly in front of my bed, was a huge clock with a luminously painted face like that of a man. The hands were human arms. Blood streamed from the center of the dial, and I noted that the arms seemed to have been cut at the elbow from a body. Heads of spikes protruded from the forearms, making it appear that the arms were spiked to the dial. *But the arms moved*! Each fist was tightly clenched.

I tried to cry out, but my tongue clove to the roof of my mouth. I tried to shake the picture from my eyes, and to convince myself that I was dreaming. As if in answer to my thoughts, a voice at my side mumbled:

"You are *not* dreaming—nor is this a trick. Enjoy yourself while you may—these moments are your last. You are condemned to perish—at the stroke of twelve *The Hand* will descend and kill you!" I dared not look at the speaker, but kept my eyes fixed on the clock. For the first time I noticed the position of the hands, and I realized that I had but three minutes to live. I resigned myself, and with cold sweat beading on my face, I lay back on my pillows to await the end. The longer hand moved ever nearer the zero hour, until it finally came even with the mark.

Clang, a gong sounded, a terrible shriek rent the air, and a flaming hand descended toward me through the darkness. In terror I watched it until it was within a foot of my face. Then my nerves broke.

"Damn you, fiends!" I yelled as I grabbed with both hands at the fiery thing which hovered above me. Feeling solid flesh between my hands, I tore frantically at it and extracted from the clenched fist a small, uneven object. "Curse you, devil !" I screamed again, and, springing out of bed, I started fighting with my bedside tormentor. The lights flashed on. I was surrounded by friends. Falling back dumbfounded, I started an inarticulate apology. They laughed at me and dumbly pointed at my closed first. I opened it and looked at the object which I had taken from the hand. It was my fraternity pin. I was no longer a neophyte!

Harry Barsantee.

* * * *

A NARROW ESCAPE FROM—WHAT?

LATE at night, as I picked my way gingerly up the street on which I lived—there had been one or two warm days which had caused the snow to melt, then several bitterly cold days, which gave the streets and pavements a coating of ice as slippery as glass—I noticed a figure approaching on the other side of the street. I could see it was a woman, and I wondered at a woman, and evidently an old woman, being out alone at such an hour on such a dangerous street. Then something about the figure struck me as odd. I didn't know then what it was, and it passed quickly from my mind, as my thoughts returned to the problem of keeping my footing on the ice-coated pavement.

I lived in the middle of the block, and when in front of my home, the woman was directly opposite. At the point she had reached, there was a dark narrow alley running through to the next street. This was seldom used. Right by the mouth of the alley she suddenly fell. She moaned several times. It gave me the chills to hear her moan, but I started across the street to her assistance. To this day, I don't know what it was, but something warned me to go back. I did so. I entered my home, and, without making a light, quickly ran into the front parlor. As I looked through the window from the darkened room, I saw the figure on the other side of the street arise nimbly, glance quickly up and down the street, then dart into the dark depths of the alley.

In that minute I realized that it was a man—attired in woman's clothes for a purpose. Had I gone to her—or "his" assistance, it would have been an easy matter for the hold-up man to attack me and drag me into the alley but a few feet away, where he could have finished his job without danger of being disturbed.

Whether I would have been merely robbed or whether the unknown creature was some sort of a fiend, I don't know, but the fact that the footpad went to the pains of disguising as a woman would seem to indicate that he was prepared to go to any lengths. Had I not heeded that little mysterious warning from nowhere, I might not be writing this today.

David Morrison.

"Curse you, devil!" I screamed again, and springing out of bed I started fighting. . . . The lights flashed on. I was surrounded by friends

From all over the world the thrills are pouring in. There is still a chance for you, if you send in your thrill at once. The few thrills we publish this week are fairly representative, but they are not necessarily the prize winners

A TRAGEDY OF OTHER DAYS

I arrived late one night at a certain town, and was assigned a large, gloomy looking room at the end of a long, narrow hall, in the only hotel the place boasted; the building itself was an old-fashioned, rambling structure, dating back to Colonial times, lacking all modern improvements.

After writing several letters, which occupied me until just before midnight, I undressed, blew out the light, and was about to step into bed, when a tower clock began striking twelve. At the first stroke of the bell, a young woman, dressed in old-style clothes, with fear-stricken face, burst into the room, apparently through the locked hall door. Right behind her there followed a villainous looking man, hair long and dishevelled, clutching a long, thin knife in his left hand; he seized the girl by the throat, threw her back over his left arm, and choked her until her eyes protruded; then her eyes rolled back, and she went limp; taking the knife in his right hand, he stabbed her repeatedly in the chest, then threw her on the floor; after a moment he leaned over her with the most wicked look imaginable.

At the last stroke of the bell the greenish light, and both figures, faded away; I rushed down to the office, where I spent the remainder of the night; in the morning the proprietor admitted that the room was apparently haunted, and that a number of persons had seen what I saw. It was presumed to be the re-enactment of the murder seventy years ago of a young woman, by a jealous suitor.

H. B. Palmer.

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Why Men Leave Home

By

P. L. Atkinson

ALMOST anything is liable to happen at a house party.

You know the kind I mean—a week-end mingling of corpulent stock-brokers, gay commission merchants, serious-minded young civil engineers, playful millionaires and bored dilletantes. Then there's a liberal sprinkling of young married women; meddlesome dowagers, hopeful spinsters and gushing young things who look for husbands and get into all kinds of compromising situations.

Everybody moves about restlessly in everyone else's way; in one corner a giddy flapper shakes cocktails. There is incessant chatter about golf, motoring, tennis, boot-legging and business. A bewildered butler occasionally steps into the picture, rolls his eyes heavenward and exits with a horrified, what-is-the-world-coming-to expression.

Well that's the kind of scene the curtain rises on in "Why Men Leave Home," in Avery Hopwood's newest comedy now at the Morosco Theatre.

The party is at Tom's home—on Long Island—living room with long, French windows looking out upon a forty-acre lawn and wicker chairs scattered about and all that sort of thing.

The party is made up of three husbands, three wives, a dapper young man and the girl with whom he is in love—and grandma who is continually giving the young folks good advice free of charge. No one pays any attention to her, to be sure, except to smile indulgently when she refuses a cocktail.

Sam is the oldest of the three husbands. Evidently a stock-broker. Archie, who might be a prosperous lawyer, comes next. Tom, the host and the youngest of the wedded male trio is probably a civil engineer. (Most handsome young men holding the center of the stage in such plays are civil engineers.)

Their three wives have arrived that very day from abroad where they spent the entire summer shopping in Paris, gambling at Monte Carlo and sailing up and down the Nile. How they ever got their trunks home the same day they set foot on shore—and they must have got them because they were all so remarkably well and fashionably dressed—is not for me to say.

But of one thing we may be certain, their husbands were tickled to death to see them, couldn't take their eyes off them and followed them about like lapdogs.

Well it got along toward night, as usual, and the conversation drifted toward marital faithfulness.

That the wives were faithful during their long absence was taken for granted. But the husbands—ah—!

Tom, the youngest husband was, of course, hardest hit by his wife's absence and neglect. He started to talk to her about a particularly profitable business deal, but she cut him short with her frivolity. He mentioned that he wanted a son and heir above all things in this world, and she pouted. One could scarcely blame pretty little Fifi for that. Tom was in a fair way of becoming a bore.

When the chattering wives left the room, the three men compared notes and it appeared that each of them had "cheated" just a trifle during their wives's sojourn in foreign parts. Out of sheer loneliness of course.

Archie started the ball rolling by innocently recalling that he had seen Sam at the Palais Royal at one in the morning with a fair creature draped across his arm. Sam asked Archie what he was doing there himself at that hour, and Archie confessed that he had fallen for a Hula Hula girl who was teaching him the ukelele. Tom made a general, all around confession—all of which was not lost on Billy, the love-sick swain, who had quite made up his mind to propose to Sylvia at the first convenient moment.

His proposal was unique in the annals of love making.

"I love you," he said in effect. "I know I am poor. My miserable six thousand dollars a year will scarcely keep you in the luxury to which you have been accustomed. But, if we really love one another, what difference will it make if we live on the other side of town? Besides that, I shall expect you to bear me several children."

Sylvia resented this kind of talk spiritedly. She didn't intend to marry a poor, jazzless man, she wouldn't live in the slums and moreover children were out of the question. Nothing doing.

"Why Men Leave Home" is Avery Hopwood's newest farce and follows "The Bat" at the Morosco Theater. Mr. Hopwood is probably one of the most successful playwrights of our time; at one period last season he had seven plays, all immense hits, running on Broadway. "Why Men Leave Home" bids fair to rival his other plays in public estimation

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WHEN, in his youthful ardor, Billy tells her how such women as she drive men to other women, illustrating his remarks by pointing out Tom, Archie and Sam as examples of the depth of degradation to which a gadding wife's husband may ultimately descend.

Sylvia was a natural born gossip as well as a more or less natural born goddess; she can't help telling the three wives what she has just heard about their husbands.

Hell is to pay.

The wives agree that things have come to a pretty pass if a man cannot be trusted at home when his wife leaves him alone only nine months out of the year. Their indignation knows, as the saying goes, no bounds.

Archie, who is more or less of a human cockroach, takes his tongue-lashing from Betty with humility. Her sarcastic references to the Hawaiian race wither him completely. He is a mental, as well as a moral, wreck.

Sam, more experienced in affairs matrimonial, accepts his exposure with an easy grace that captures Archie's admiration.

Tom, however, is hurt to the core. Like a mighty oak he bows to the storm, but you know he will never topple over.

Night, as before mentioned, comes on. And night implies sleep; sleep implies bedrooms; a Long Island country house implies twin-beds—so—later we find ourselves in Tom and Fifi's bedroom.

The two wives enter, each triumphant in the thought that they have locked their bedrooms against their husbands. More, they have thrown each hubby's clothes outside the door, in the hall, and they hope it rains and that the poor fellows will have to sleep outside in the yard. So there.

The two poor, homeless husbands show up in Fifi's and Tom's room presently, carrying their clothes in their arms, begging for a place to sleep. Why the whole household should make a thoroughfare or a camping ground out of the host and hostess's bedroom is a mystery. Personally, we would resent it in our house. But then, a house party you know! Sam and Archie are soon disposed of.

Grandma enters, probably in the hope of spearing a night-cap, slips the assembled hen-party an earful of good advice for them to sleep on and then, after the others leave, confines her attentions to Fifi. That young wife swears that though her husband may have been trapped by another woman, she, Fifi, will win him back if it takes the utmost allurement of the most expensive lingerie in all Paris to turn the trick. Grandma puts her O.K. on the plan, and when we see Fifi later in that same lingerie, she looks like an easy winner.

BUT hold. Life is not so simple as that! Not at a Long Island country house during a house-party!

Fifi picks up Tom's dressing gown, smothers it with delicious and anticipatory kisses and—Migod what is this? She holds aloft a pink, scented envelope—draws a pink scented letter from it, and reads, "Darling: How can I ever forget that last night in the moonlight—and your kisses—and the swans, etc., etc."

For once grandma is floored. Fifi has to think of something herself. She does.

"He won't get away from me," she cries. "This—this—this—woman shall not take him. He is mine—MINE—MINE."

Grandma is blown out on the last "mine."

Tom enters from the moonlit balcony. He is smoking a cigarette and carrying a magazine, both of which he does gracefully. He sits down wearily and takes up the story where he left off. Fifi sirens toward him, unseen, unheard. She cuddles up in his lap, she throws her arms about him, she rains kisses on him, she beams upon him—but Tom continues reading. We would give much to know (1) the name of the magazine and (2) the name of the story.

At last Tom peels her off his lap rather languidly and stalks into the next room from which he emerges, pajamaed and dressing-gowned. We think something is bound to happen now, and it does. He picks up the magazine and starts reading again! Fifi tries a few more blandishments and then gives it up—temporarily.

She leaps into bed, though how she expected to get to sleep in that mass of lingerie is more than a mere man could pretend to say, and Tom, occupying bed number two, says his little prayers and quietly rolls over for a good night's sleep.

Editor's Note: At this point the audience sighed, settled itself and not a few drowsed a bit themselves. One of the nicest, quietest moments that any show ever pulled. It was a relief.

Suddenly a shriek rents the air.

"She can't have you!" cries Fifi. "She shan't take you from me. You are MINE. You are MINE. You are MINE."

Tom surprised, rather than disturbed by the outburst rises calmly, dons his dressing-gown demurely and stands beside Fifi's bed.

He admits the letter from Doris Ketchum. How could he deny it? He admits that it is from a woman who made him forget the pangs caused by her absence; he just as good as tells her that this other woman has stolen her way right into his great, big, lonely heart.

And then he says, "You are not mine. I am not yours. You have never been my wife. I have never been your husband! We have lived together on infrequent occasions much as any man might live with any—— (word deleted). We have no home, we have no children. I am going to leave you in the morning. But just now I am going out to sleep on the summer porch. Please don't follow me or disturb me in any way. Good night."

Imagine it for yourself. These young people hadn't been together for months and months. He was madly in love with her; she was wild about him—and the most emotional experience that comes to them is this heart-rending bedroom scene.

"The Heart of a Tinpanner"

W. Carey Wonderley's

big new novel of life in

New York begins in next

week's MIDNIGHT

You'll be sorry if you

miss it!

No wonder Fifi flung herself out of bed and slept on the floor until morning.

BUT, ah, what a morning!

The butler is up bright and early.

The telephone bell rings in the living room.

"Yes. Yes. Mr. Tom is not up yet ma'am. Miss Ketchum? You will be here at ten o'clock. All right, ma'am. Very good, ma'am."

When Fifi hears that Miss Ketchum will be there, in her own home, at ten o'clock she goes right up in the air.

"That woman DARES to come here? In my own home?"

"Yes," Tom replies, "and as my wife you will receive her. I shall take a stroll about the place. Let me know when she arrives."

The indignant wife is rooted to the spot.

But she is violently uprooted when the butler, a moment later, announces "Miss Ketchum" in a loud tone of voice.

Everything goes black before Fifi. She grasps at the table for support. She is aroused by a female voice inquiring for Mr. Tom. She opens her eyes upon the sad, sad world and discovers that Miss Ketchum is a young lady not more than six years old.

The two become firm friends, Tom appears, there is more talk about his leaving and her getting a divorce—the child looks up into both their faces—and what would you do if you were in his or her place? They did.

The lesson of the play is clearly shown.

Don't leave your husband alone nine months in the year and go running up and down Europe. If you do, he will find some other woman to whom his heart will turn. Of course, none of these men really did turn to any other woman. But the moral must be there just the same.

No, my friend, that isn't the reason why men leave home.

Some men leave home because—well, just because—while others, by far the majority, leave home because they can't take it with them.

Out of the Night

(*Continued from page* 18)

"Where are you hurt, honey?" he cooed to her ear, a great fear in his heart—a guilty fear, for having left her alone.

"I am all right now," she said slowly. "I'm not hurt, just—scared." He looked her all over, not even deigning a glance for the still figure on the rug. Finally he saw that she was telling the truth. She was suffering from shock—nothing else.

He took her in his arms again. She was calmed and breathing more easily in a moment or two.

"The money is all right, Dickie boy," she said. "He tried—" suddenly, as though it was for the first time, she perceived the quiet heap on the floor. Shivering, she drew back into Dick's protecting arms again.

He put her aside gently and went to the still form. He turned him over on his back and listened intently.

"He's gone," he said quietly, and gazed at him a moment in silence.

Something caught his eye—surely he knew this man! Swiftly Dick bent down and tugged at the stubby beard. It came off in his hand.

He looked into the face of John Carrington, the senior partner.

Nature vs. Moral Laws

(*Continued from page* 19)

like Nature a free-willed occasion of sin. I do not see any difference in accusing God of creating a force called Nature which rebels against the invented moral codes, then I do in accusing Him of creating a creature called Man who has always broken the invented moral codes.

God made Nature as a collection of free and powerful forces with the inherent prerogative to work out their own ends, even as He created Man free-willed and possessed of these natural forces to work out his own destiny.

The most titanic struggle between Nature and the moral codes is waged on account of Sex impulses. It is natural for men to desire women. It is just as natural for women to desire men.

Thousands of years ago it was considered lawful for a man to have many wives. Such a law was favorable to the impulses of Nature from the viewpoint of the male. It meant that the sex impulse in man which is after all, except in the case of very poetical and idealistic men, an animal passion, was unimpeded by any moral legislation. As for the woman, she never has been allowed by man to let her natural sex impulses have free rein. Man has always been too powerful, and too crafty to allow women to respond fully to their sex impulses. Consequently, for many ages only women went against a moral code when they gave way to sex impulses. It was lawful for men to do so.

Then there was a revision of those moral codes. Man invented a statute which damned up his own sex impulses against the strong and sacred walls for a one-woman-for-every-man-marriage. He committed himself to marry only one woman. Still, he reserved the right to gratify his sex impulses with many women, not his wives, without suffering the penalty women pay for being guilty of adultery.

Consequently, we find today that Nature is in greater revolt against man-made moral laws than ever before, because there are so many such laws to stifle our human impulses and our natural inclinations.

WE do not have to stop at the sexual phase of life to prove Nature is against the moral laws. Take the universal law against stealing. Everybody knows that the beginning of thievery was caused by the impulse of man to preserve his own life.

Once upon a time a man was hungry and cold. He saw that his neighbor had plenty of food and

(*Continued on page* 29)

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Sold to the Devil

By John R. Coryell

A desperate man's pact with Satan

JOSEPHUS MARBLE, a wealthy financier, saw a young man hiding something in a hole under the turf. He recovered it, and found it was a slip of paper on which was written: "I'll sell my soul to the Devil for fifty dollars. Everett Lane." Mr. Marble hunted Everett Lane up and found him a fine-looking young man of about twenty-five who had come to New York because James Walters, a New York magnate, had ruined his father, the ruin being practically responsible for his father's death. He hated Walters and intended to get revenge. Now he was destitute and hungry Josephus Marble, who did not like Walters any too well himself, was interested. He helped the young man with money and clothes. Lane managed to become private secretary to Walters under the assumed name of Robert Street. In the line of his secretarial duties he came out with Walters to his Long Island home and there met Mrs. Walters, who hated her husband—as everybody did—and wormed his secret from him, promising to be his ally. He also met Beryl, Walter's daughter, and was greatly impressed by her young beauty. Walters unexpectedly returned and discovered his wife in a tete a tete with his new secretary. Walters warns his new secretary against his wife, who, he declares, is his enemy. Mrs. Walters tries to get Lane to steal certain papers from his employer's safe, which he refuses to do. Sometime later is it discovered that the safe has been robbed.

VII

WALTERS' announcement that his safe had been opened and robbed was a shock to Lane. He saw almost instantly how it would affect his position if it should become known that he was there under a false name. He saw, too, that it would give Mrs. Walters the hold on him that she wished for. Even if he saw fit to accuse her, she had only to reveal his identity to direct suspicion to him. She could deny everything, and he could prove nothing. Truly she was a clever woman. What she could not accomplish in one way she did in another.

He stared at Walters, seeking to discover if he was suspected. Apparently not.

"Was anything valuable taken?" he asked.

"My God! Valuable!" gasped Walters. "It will mean disaster for me if my enemy gets hold of those papers."

"You're sure they're gone?" inquired Lane.

"Of course I'm sure. I looked for them the first thing."

"Anything else taken?"

"Nothing, nothing. Some one who knows their value has taken them. They were there only yesterday. Some enemy! My God!"

It was evident from his distracted manner that the papers were of great importance.

"Why not send for a detective at once?" Lane asked.

"Come in!" and Walters fairly pulled the young man into the library and closed the door. "I'm at my wits' end. I don't dare send for a detective. I don't know what to do."

"Is there no clew? Nothing you can see to suggest the thief?"

"Nothing. Look at it yourself. I don't seem to be able to think straight. Help me now and I'll make your fortune. Yes, I'll give you your chance with Beryl. I'll do anything for you if you'll recover those papers."

To see Jim Walters in such a fright gave Lane an adequate notion of the importance of the papers. But his promise to give him a chance to win Beryl furnished a new incentive, a greater one even than the need to protect himself.

He ran to the safe and knelt down before it. The door was open, so that the contents could easily be seen; and a little drawer at one side was drawn out. It was quite empty.

"Was the safe just like this when you came in?" he asked.

"No, it was closed. I opened it. Whoever stole the papers knew and used the combination. If I hadn't opened the drawer the first thing I wouldn't have known anything about it."

It was clear enough to Lane that Mrs. Walters had done it. He wondered if Walters had any suspicion of her.

"Do you suspect no one?" he asked.

"No one. To tell the truth I did think of you; but I saw the absurdity of that right away. You had the chance yesterday while I was away, but I saw the papers there the last thing before I went to bed. If I had only changed the combination then! I might have thought you came down in the night—I'll be honest with you—but I have a secret electric alarm connecting the door of this room with a buzzer at the head of my bed. It didn't go off."

"Who else knew of it?"

"No one; not even Beryl."

"It can be disconnected, of course."

"Certainly, by anyone who knows about it. It is hidden just outside the door of the room."

"Some of the servants in cleaning may have——"

"Impossible; it is too well hidden. I will show it to you. Come!"

He led Lane into the library, took several books from a shelf by the side of the door, touched a spring which operated a small, sliding door, revealing a small switch.

All these precautions emphasized the importance Walters attached to the stolen papers. He peered in for a moment, and then started up and looked at Walters.

"Did you say you had turned on the switch last night?"

"Positive. Yes, why?"

Walters looked closely at the switch. Evidently it was turned off. He reflected a moment, steadying his thoughts. Yes, he knew he had turned it on. He could recall taking the books out, and for the first time looking at their titles. He remembered putting them back scornfully, wondering why grown men should waste their time in writing stories. He bought books for their costly bindings or for their value as early editions. Yes, it was as clear in his memory as if he had but just done it.

"It is turned off," he said almost in a whisper.

"Yes," responded Lane.

"Then somebody did know about it, somebody in the house probably. It wasn't you, Street?"

Lane shook his head sadly. "No, I give you my word of honor I didn't. But I don't blame you for suspecting me. Is—is there no one else in the house you might suspect?"

Walters stared at him, dismay growing on his face. "Lucy! Good God! It was Lucy. Now she can do what she pleases with me." He dropped into a chair like a man beaten down, and covered his rugged face with his hands. "Lucy!" he groaned. "It must have been Lucy. She is so infernally clever. And she hates me. But I can buy them of her. Yes, I can buy them of her. I'll offer her a fortune. That'll be best, won't it? I'll go to her at once before she has time to dispose of them. That will be best, won't it?"

"I think I'd wait for her to make the first advance," Lane answered.

"I can't do that; I can't wait. Every moment is agony. She may know the papers are important, but not how important. But if she has a chance to show them to anyone else—Oh, I'll be stripped. You don't realize; you can't. I was fighting for my life once and I made agreements. If I had kept those agreements—But it doesn't matter. You wouldn't understand."

The young man wanted to tell him that he understood only too well. Evidently his father's case was only one of others. Probably the contract stolen from his father had been one of the papers taken from this safe. If the old thought of revenge had still had hold of him, he might have chosen this time to reveal himself. But, in spite of himself, he was genuinely sorry for Walters; and if he hadn't been he knew that the thought of Beryl would have restrained him.

Walters rose heavily to his feet and started toward the door. Lane put a restraining hand on his arm. "You are too much disturbed to go now. You will betray your need for the papers, and give her all the advantage. Besides she may not be up yet."

"What does it matter? I am willing to pay her own price."

Lane wanted to urge that she might not have taken the papers, but he was too sure that she had, though he wondered how she had had the courage. Then he reflected that she might have pretended reluctance the day before, merely to induce him to take the risk.

Walters dreaded the interview with his wife. He knew how sharp her tongue could be, he knew how she hated him, he knew how cold and hard she could be; but also he knew better than anyone else the harm that could be done him through the stolen papers. In all his ruthless life he had never known such fear as gripped him then.

He met her maid near her door. She was an angular French woman in the early thirties, with a hard, thin-lipped mouth and glittering black eyes.

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Was Man Made for Marriage?

(*Continued from page 6*)

"Marriage was made for man, not man for marriage," is one of the mental hand-grenades thrown by the Reverend Grant. Now to us un-canonized ones, that statement sounds like simple common sense—self-evident, self-proved and more than substantiated by facts. But not so, to the bishops of the Church—the Church that boasts that it has not changed, and will not change since its mind was first made up. Can you imagine? Suppose no person had changed his mind about any thing since the days of Adam and the fig-leaf? But come to think of it, probably no man would if it had not been for woman—woman is the original mind-changer—hence the whole problem of clothes and divorce and everything. But we are wandering. Our mind *will* revert to the question of a new fall wrap and the changing fashions and—how can I be interested in divorce—we've already had a couple—and that's enough.

But Dr. Grant hasn't had a divorce—yet. That's why he is interested in it. He says that "to deny divorce will add to the immorality and confusion of American life." Now everybody will agree that anything that can add anything to the confusion of American life (I'm not so familiar with the immorality) ought to be headed off somehow. If the Episcopalian church can do it—well, it will have accomplished *something* substantial.

It really ought to do it. We agree with Mr. Grant.

And this, too, sounds convincing. Of course to some, having already decided that the world is grown up and that it doesn't need nurses and pap-bottles and swaddling-clothes and "all-day-suckers" and other insignia of the infantile class, the Reverend Mr. Grant's observations do not sound so unreasonable.

He says: "Worthwhile institutions have always grown out of conditions. When we attempt to manufacture conditions according to specifications, when we attempt to grind them out of our institutions as the factory product is ground out of the machine, we are in for certain disappointment and despair.

"If monogamy is the ideal human relationship—and I believe it is—the only way it can be achieved in an individualistic society, like that of America, is through the greatest possible freedom to correct marital missteps.

"To compel a man and woman who hate each other to live together in married intimacy is an idea so unholy and impure that every mind not de humanized by formulas must revolt against it. The gentlemen who propose this inhuman solution of our greatest human problem, however, are neither immoral nor impure; they are simply blinded by dogmatism.

"If a man and woman are held together through coercion, instead of through ties of tenderness, they will inevitably become secret enemies, and life for both will be a continual debasing conspiracy."

Where They Get Their Authority

"THE whole agitation within the modern church against the remarriage of the divorced, and against the granting of divorce except on the one ground of adultery, is based upon a few remarks in the New Testament attributed to Jesus. 'He that putteth away his wife for any cause other than adultery, is himself an adulterer,' is the most quoted passage; but those who quote it are generally content to quote the words and utterly ignore the meaning.

"The fact is there are no 'wives' in America in the sense that Jesus used the term. A wife in the old patriarchal societies was her husband's property. Her relation to him was very similar to that of a slave. She did not select him as her mate. She had nothing to say about it. The marriage was arranged by the elders of the two families concerned and the wife was presented to the contracting household for value received, known in history as the marriage dowry. In her new position the one thing that was expected of her was obedience. She had no rights. She was not in any sense a contracting party. She was utterly helpless, utterly dependent upon her husband's good-will, and her one chance in life was to win his favor

"If she failed in any particular, he was free to divorce her, to write out a statement that he was through with her and to send her away unprotected, without social recognition, with no right to re-enter the family she came from and repudiated by the one to which she had been assigned. She was an utter outcast; for it was in the family, not in the state, that social standing was maintained."

"DIVORCE under such circumstances was a cruel and inhuman procedure. If no word of Jesus was recorded on the subject, we might still be certain of His exact attitude. There is, in fact, grave doubt as to the authenticity of the words attributed to Him; but there is no doubt that they express something of the Christ spirit.

"Even though the law permitted such cruelty, Christian ethics could not. That a woman was in the man's power put him under obligations to her; not only the obligation of strict justice but the obligation of mercy.

"But there are no wives in this sense today. There is no family in the patriarchal sense. Social relationships have utterly changed but we still use the same old words. This is more true of America than of any other country on earth, for while the European countries passed through an industrial revolution in which the family, of necessity, gave way to other institutions, America never really had a patriarchal family life.

"European countries may talk of going back to some previous order. They can't do it, of course, but they may talk about it; the idea is at least conceivable. But such a thing is not conceivable in America. The furthest back we could go in America would be the pioneer days; and can any one conceive of our getting together and saying that we'll all become pioneers once more?"

THE Reverend Mr. Grant agrees that the family life of America is in grave danger, but he does not speak of it in quite the scathing terms that the Reverend Christian F. Reisner, pastor of the Chelsea Methodist Episcopalian church, Fort Washington Avenue and 178th Street employs:

Dr. Reisner, who has just returned from a three month's stay in Europe, declares that American morals are the worst in the world.

"Nowhere in all Europe is there such a widespread indifference to all that women formerly held sacred as there is in America. And I do not mean merely here in New York. New York City is only an example, or perhaps I might say an exaggeration, of the vices that afflict our national life. I think that stricter divorce laws should be enacted. I am not one of those who believe in the no-divorce policy. There are cases where divorce is justifiable and makes for the best moral condition. I do not agree that a woman should continue to live with and raise children by a man who is unfaithful, unregenerate and brutal. But this wholesale, irresponsible, 'just-for-fun' attitude that I see on all sides in regard to what should be the most sacred obligation of human life—it sickens me."

Dr. Reisner is intensely in earnest. He really believes that American life and especially American women are on the high road to national collapse—even as was Ancient Rome.

"We are being cheapened and degraded in the eyes of all Europe by our scornful indifference toward the sacredness of marriage and the home," said he. "Such instances as that of the Walska-McCormick affair and the puss-in-the-corner game of the whole family in their matrimonial mix-up is a disgrace to American womanhood.

"Yes, I do think that easy divorce has a lot to do with it. I think it is the first let down of the bars of restraint. Now American women pride themselves on their independence; they smoke and drink and swear and carouse—just as men of a certain type used to do. That, they imagine is emancipation—emancipation—Great Heavens! What are we coming to?"

THE Reverend Mr. Reisner takes the matter of woman's reckless use of her newly-secured freedom very seriously. It must be some job to keep books for the universe. One wonders how the Cosmos would run if really left to itself? Can't it be trusted? It would seem not. One has to be right "on the job" every minute—if one is a clergyman.

"Now, for instance," Reverend Reisner was speaking, "coming over on the boat with me was an actress." (He never lowered his voice but said the word right out.) "I was talking to her. She was about to be married for, I think it was the third, time. She defended the idea of divorce saying that marriage was not so serious a thing—any more than any other human relationship——. Think of it! A perfectly lovely and charming woman in other respects, but with her mind tainted with the idea that there is nothing sacred—even serious—about marriage!

"And a man—a prominent business man—his daughter was going to be married. Neither she nor the father knew much about the fellow the girl was to marry—they did not think it necessary to make inquiries or seriously to consider whether they would be happy together—'O, she can get a divorce if she wants to'—that's the way that business man looked at it."

"And how about Dr. Grant?" I asked. "Do you think he, too, has a personal motive in his advocacy of easy divorce?"

Dr. Reisner emphatically repudiated any thought on that score. "Dr. Grant has always stood for re-marriage of divorced couples within the Episcopal church. I don't think his present attitude is anything strictly new—or actuated by selfish motives," he said. "In our church, which of course has nothing to do with the Episcopal church, we recognize only one ground for divorce—and we abide by that."

And there you are. "Easy divorce, no divorce, hard divorce"—it all sounds like the rattle of the dice in a box.

I couldn't help thinking as I wended my way Midnight-ward, of the kindest, sympathetic-ist, sanest preacher of them all—who never preached, but who always helped, because she loved and because she knew the hearts of women—Ella Wheeler Willcox, whom I once called "friend." She summed it up in these words:

"So many thoughts, so many creeds, so
many ways that wind and wind;
While just the art of being kind, is all this
old world needs."

"Where Are New Yorkers Born?"

Read the excruciatingly funny account of the efforts of one of our staff writers to find a real New Yorker in the Big Town

It can't be done

Next weeks MIDNIGHT

"Just How Blue are the Blue Laws?"

Next week's MIDNIGHT will enlighten you on this subject.

Two pages of beautiful women in next week's MIDNIGHT

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Sold to the Devil

(Continued from page 23)

She shrank from him when he approached her, but eyed him defiantly. She evidently feared him, but otherwise seemed to share her mistress's feeling toward him.

"Is Mrs. Walters up yet, Marie?" he asked.

"I do not think so, sir," she answered with a very slight accent.

"Well, anyhow," he said, "go tell her that I wish to see her about something very important."

"She will be angry if I disturb her, sir," she protested.

"It doesn't matter. Do as I tell you."

The woman shrugged her thin shoulders and opened the door and disappeared into the room. Presently she returned saying almost insolently, "She asks what you want."

"I will tell her when I see her," he returned with a touch of his usual imperious manner. "Say to her that I must see her at once."

Again the woman shrugged as she went back into the room; and once more she returned after a considerable lapse of time, and held the door open. "Madame will see you," she said.

He drew a deep breath and passed into the room Marie followed him into the bed-room beyond, where Mrs. Walters sat up in bed, wrapped in a filmy, lace garment.

"You are doing me a great honor, Jim," Mrs. Walters said, her eyes fixed on him inquiringly. but her manner altogether sarcastic.

"Leave us!" he said to Marie, who looked first at her mistress before going out.

* * * * *

VIII

WHEN they were alone Walters looked at his wife searchingly. If, as he fully believed, she was guilty of the theft, at least she showed no sign of it on her beautiful face. On the contrary her expression was one of pure curiosity.

Walters knew so well, however, her ability as an actress that he did not allow himself to be affected by her appearance. She, on her part, studied him with the closest scrutiny, but refrained from speaking. She knew that he would speak the more vehemently because of her continued silence. And so it proved, for suddenly he burst forth, "I've been robbed."

She started, and he noted it, but almost instantly she had controlled herself. "Really!" she drawled. "Well, I suppose turn about is fair play. It has been said more than once that you have made your money by robbing others."

He flushed and trembled with anger. He was on the point of making a furious denial, when he recalled that she invariably got the best of their encounters by prodding him into a fury.

"My safe was opened and some valuable papers taken from it, last night," he said, ignoring her injurious remark.

Her eyes opened wide. "Your safe was opened? How? Burglars get in?"

She looked the picture of astonishment, but he was not to be fooled. "I value those papers highly," he stated.

"How did you say the safe was opened?" she asked.

"It was opened by someone who knew the combination, and who knew the value of those papers."

"Of course," she drawled, "I knew the value of the papers. Don't you remember how in the good, old days, in a moment of expansion, you told me how highly you valued some papers."

He almost choked at her casual manner. "And the combination?" he asked huskily, "how did you find that out?"

She smiled as if greatly amused. "Will you hand me that box, please. The one on my dressing table."

He handed her the box she indicated, angry at her light manner of speech, but suspecting that somehow the box bore on the subject of his question. She opened the box by means of a tiny key she wore on a gold chain about her neck.

From the box she took out a piece of office blotting paper and with a low laugh handed it to him. One side was blank; on the other side something had been blotted. He turned it over two or three times curiously, then looked at her questioningly.

"Hold it up to the mirror," she said.

A sudden, faint suggestion of what the blotter meant, came to him, and he quickly held it up so that he could see the reflection in the mirror. The combination was there just as he had blotted it.

She shrank from him when he approached her, but eyed him defiantly. She evidently feared him, but otherwise seemed to share her mistress' feeling toward him

She laughed at his expression of consternation. He turned heavily toward her. "What is your price?" he asked.

She laughed again, evidently in a very merry mood. "What amazes me and often has," she said with seeming irrelevance, "is how men can be so successful when they are so stupid. Now, if you'd had any wit at all, you'd have known that I wouldn't have shown you that blotter if I had used the combination. I kept that just to show it to you some day when I wanted to impress on you what a dull-witted clod you are. You are big and you have a loud voice, but you don't seem to have any brains at all. I should think men would have found you out by this time. You will remember that it didn't take me long to discover that all you had was a loud roar." She smiled pleasantly as she concluded.

More than once since he had married her, Jim Walters had had the desire to shake her, but never before had he looked at her round, white throat with the desire to encircle it with the grip of his two strong hands as he did at that moment.

"How much do you want?" he demanded sullenly.

"You insist on believing I opened your safe?"

"Yes, I believe it. What is your price?"

"My good, stupid man!" She affected to yawn. "Must I tell you in so many words that I didn't open your safe? Have you no enemies in the world who would do anything to get those papers? I don't know anything about your papers."

"How much do you want?" he repeated doggedly.

"About five millions," she answered, laughing lightly.

"Give me the papers and you shall have the money," he said.

"But I tell you I haven't your papers, and don't know where they are. If you were more of a gentleman you would know you mustn't doubt the word of a lady."

"You can get them."

"I find you very annoying, Jim. No doubt the papers are in the hands of someone who will want very much more than five millions. For my part I would be satisfied with that. If I had them I would make the exchange at once."

She lolled back among her pillows with such an air of easy unconcern, and was so provokingly insolent that he was goaded into starting toward her so threateningly that she drew a small automatic from under her pillow and calmly pointed it at him.

"Better not, Jim," she said quietly. "Why should I deny that I have the papers when it should be clear even to your dull brain that I would exchange them for five millions."

He paced up and down the room several times trying to compose himself; and she watched him with an amused smile curving her lips. Something told him that she was truthful in saying she hadn't the papers,but equally he felt certain that she would not be so composed if she did not know where they were.

"I suppose," he said finally, "I must believe you when you say you haven't the papers; but I want to tell you you're a fool if you know where they are and don't get them. You'll never make as good terms if anybody else has them."

She realized that there was truth in what he said. "I'll tell you how it is, Jim. I haven't the papers, and I don't know where they are, but I don't mind saying I have a suspicion. Perhaps I can find out so as to bring you word at the office this afternoon."

"Ah!" he breathed in relief.

"You might have those five millions ready for me this afternoon. I know you'll have to pay that much, but maybe you'll have to pay more."

"How much more? That's a great deal of money."

"Now Jim! don't begin to bargain just because you feel relieved. Why can't you take your medicine as you've made many better men than you do? You know that if those papers fell into the hands of the Marble crowd, they'd strip you clean."

He did know it; and he knew he would give up twice five millions rather than have men he had wronged as he had wronged the Marble following get possession of those papers.

"I'll be ready for you this afternoon," he growled.

"Don't try to play any tricks, Jim," she laughed as he passed out of the room.

He did not answer her. A great load had been lifted from his mind. He might have been utterly destroyed and at the same time dishonored; and now he had only a price to pay for safety; an enormous price, it was true, but comparatively only a small one after all.

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Bring Back the Chaperon

(*Continued from page* 11)

to, God knows where, with God knows whom and do God knows what.

Am I right? And furthermore is it not true that on most occasions like the one described you have stinging little flurries of worry—nasty little convictions that you ought to know more about your daughter's parties, et cetera?

If you were allowed to follow her on some of her social adventures perhaps the little flurries and convictions would grow as high as mountain tops and as broad as the salt seas.

After all, perhaps it wasn't Jack downstairs. Perhaps it was Florence, or some other girl friend who, like Marigold, had found an empty evening and decided to fill it themselves.

We'll say it was Florence, instead of Jack.

The two girls hail a taxi and dash down to a very well-known hotel where the lobbies and alley are always crowded with men and women who are out for some kind of an experience. If you could ask the house detective as Marigold and Florence float into the brilliantly lighted hotel like moths drawn towards luring flames he would tell you at once that they are not guests of the hotel.

To him they are only two of many hundreds of young girls out for whatever a night may offer as diversion. He sees their kind day in and out. He watches them. The more harmless ones he allows to go their way. The sophisticated ones he must watch more closely. They are the kind who ruin the reputation of a hotel with men who register their families at the desk. No man, he will tell you, wants his wife and daughters to live at a hotel where the obvious women are allowed to ply their trade.

Of course your daughter is really not that kind of girl—She merely approaches and approximates the demi-monde. However, it is difficult to approach fire and not run the risk of being scorched or perhaps badly burned.

There are always enough idle men waiting around to interest themselves in a young and pretty girl. Marigold and Florence find very little difficulty in picking up two fairly attractive escorts. The Lord knows you've heard enough about Broadway dining-dancing clubs, Chicago cabarets, or country road-houses without my telling you that they are nothing like the places where you went to dance in your youth attended by sufficient chaperones. It is enough to say that in spite of old man Volstead and the Izzy Einsteins, liquor can be bought at such places—is bought, and is drunk by young girls and everybody else present.

To all appearances they are places within the pale of conventions and civilization. But, as a matter of fact, after midnight they might just as well be down in deepest Africa far from the last outpost of civilization. There is little restraint—little attempt to be governed by conventions. In Africa the wild women streak their faces with paint and bare their limbs. At American parties the wild girls do likewise. But the African lassies, remember please, do not mingle with the men. They are kept apart and do not even venture to peep out from their sheltering bushes, or to make eyes and intrigue with smiles.

I can well imagine such a thing as a chaperone tagging along with a gang of the younger generation to places one finds in brazen glory along the Great White Way. But, to get back to Marigold and Florence. Suppose they were burdened with a chaperone? Do you think they would swallow the stuff that strange men place before them to intoxicate their young bodies and paralyze both their instinct for danger and their common sense?

Never! In the first place if chaperones were not out of business, girls would not get into such places of temptation because no self-respecting elder would enter the places with a party.

There is no doubt but that there have been some killjoy chaperones in this world—cranks who wanted to stifle the joy out of youth and make the young and flexible into old and stiff fogies. But, on the other hand, there have been some mighty fun-loving human sort of people who filled the role of chaperone unobtrusively, and at the same time created that restraint necessary to good morals and manners.

I know what the answer of the girls and boys will be to this discussion of chaperones. They will tell me that I am an old bundle of prehistoric propriety, and deserve to be carted off to the dumping grounds for chaperones. As a matter of fact I am nothing of the kind. I do not believe for instance that the flapper, male or female, is a terrible sinner, or a sinner at all. I like the flappers. I am a little overage to be one myself, but still young enough to like a good time. It doesn't appeal to me to have a chaperone around. I feel too conscious of their restraining presence.

BUT,——

What we like to do is not always best for us. The day may come when Marigold and Florence will regret they did not have a chaperone along. Life flows swiftly these days. Today we are standing in water up to our waist. The next moment the tide may sweep over our heads. It's cumbersome, awkward and not half so much fun swimming with a life-preserver. But, it is much safer if we are novices. The same idea applies to the chaperone. She's an overload lots of times. She gets in the way of what we may innocently enough call "fun." However she may also manage to get in between a girl and a fatal step.

Chaperones kill modern parties!

This is the startling, staggering answer a young man who lives in Jacksonville, Florida, gave me when I asked him what he thought about recalling chaperones. In other words he meant that there are things going on at modern parties no decent chaperone would allow.

Returning to Marigold and Florence for a last time. What do you think happened after they bolted the supper club? Nothing short of a joy ride that was made more joyous by the false sensation of pleasure created by liquor.

And then? Well, only Marigold, Florence and the men can tell their entire story.

Ten years ago and later, it was quite a thrilling experience to hold a girl's hand on a chaperoned party. Men looked upon such a thing as a great achievement. They not only outwitted the chaperone, but they also won a little romantic triumph. Today if a man doesn't kiss a girl the first night he takes her out—if he doesn't pet her considerably, he calls himself a jug of frozen molasses, and the girl probably believed he's paralyzed.

Well, why not?

They are both alone, unrestrained. Why be formal? Distant?

They are both young human animals with only a shallow veneer between themselves and the primitive, unconventional man of ten thousand years ago, or the savage in the depths of Africa today.

Why not take intriguing steps? Why not play with fire?

There's no chaperone to say "STOP, LOOK AND LISTEN."

Their own impulses, emotions, some bootleg hooch in their blood, the devil whispering in their young ears, and their flesh answering. These are the things that have free sway at modern parties. These are the things that ought to make parents demand a return of the unwanted chaperone. What do you think?

Sold to the Devil

(*Continued from page* 25)

He returned to the workroom with a lighter heart than he had taken from it. Lane was waiting for him. "You have been successful," the young man cried in a tone of relief.

"Yes. She declares she didn't open the safe or take the papers; but she admitted having the combination."

"She induced someone else to do it for her," suggested Lane.

"I don't know. She says she doesn't know where the papers are, but nevertheless expects to be able to bring them to me this afternoon."

"I'm glad of that," asserted Lane, although he was surprised that he could say it truthfully.

"She is a terrible woman, Street. And she seemed the sweetest, most innocent girl in the world. It's hard to believe her the same person. Five millions for her share, Street! And more for her partners. It is plain blackmail, but my hands are tied. Never be tempted, Street, no matter what your need, to do anything that isn't square. You'll be sorry for it sooner or later. The fault may be mine, somehow; I don't know. But Street, that woman's a devil."

"She is evidently very clever and not over-scrupulous."

"Not *over*-scrupulous!" cried Walters. "I don't think she has any moral sense at all."

Lane couldn't keep a faint smile from flitting over his face. Walters saw it, and was swift to make his own interpretation of it and to make answer to it.

"Yes, maybe I do things that wouldn't stand close inspection, but that's only in the heat of battle. Business is war; and when a man has his back against the wall, fighting for his life he can't stop to examine the ten commandments before he protects himself.

"But you just now told me to always be square, no matter what my need." And Lane laughed.

Walters was taken aback for a moment; then he laughed. "That's right, too. I wouldn't be squealing like a stuck pig now if I'd lived up to that code. But damn it a man can't see things slipping away from him without making a grab at them. It's different with a woman, though. A woman's got to be on the square, or you can't respect her."

"I like a man to be on the square as well as a woman," Lane couldn't refrain from saying. "And of course you want other men to be."

"You certainly carry your nerve around with you, young man," was Walters's comment on that." Had your breakfast yet? No? Well, we'll eat together. I like you Street. Maybe Beryl will come down and eat with us. I couldn't have swallowed a morsel, half an hour ago."

IX

AFTER a breakfast, which, because Beryl was there, Lane found the most delightful of all the breakfasts he could recall, he went out for a walk through the extensive grounds.

He would have enjoyed it infinitely more if Beryl had been with him, but she had been obliged to have a conference with the housekeeper. So he was wandering about alone, thinking mostly of her, but also trying to adjust himself to the new arrangement of things.

The matter that most troubled him was how he should explain to Marble why he wished to withdraw from the compact he had made with him for the undoing of Walters. He could not plead that he had found the latter any better than he had supposed him to be, since, in truth, he was quite as reprehensible as his worst conception of him. There was something in the man that inspired a sort of affection; but Lane was forced to admit that Beryl was at the bottom of any kindly feeling he had for Walters. In short he saw in him Beryl's father, not the pirate of Wall Street. And he knew that to Marble that would have no force as an argument.

He felt he owed a great deal to Marble; certainly he owed him an immediate confession of his change of heart. What he feared was that while Marble as a human being was kind and generous and romantic, he would not as a man of business be either kind or generous or romantic enough to have the least sympathy with his present course. As a matter of fact he had more than a suspicion that Marble, like Walters, looked on business as war; and that in such a battle as this he would be as ruthless as Walters himself.

He had seated himself on a stone bench under a great maple, and was staring absently over the Sound as these thoughts passed through his head. He was so absorbed that he had not heard light footsteps approaching, and so was startled when a merry voice called out, "Deciding how you'll invest it, Mr. Street?"

He turned quickly. Mrs. Walters, looking remarkably young and fresh in a simple, white morning frock, stood, smiling at him. "I beg your pardon," he said, with that note of inquiry that showed he had not heard her words.

"If you will permit me, I'll sit down."

He moved a little and she seated herself by his side. He knew she had sought him there, and he wondered uncomfortably what she would have to

(*Continued on page* 30)

"Shall Liberty be damned"? Some new and startling facts about censorship in next week's Midnight!

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Daughter of a Murderer

The Story of a Daughter's Struggle to Rise from the Depths!

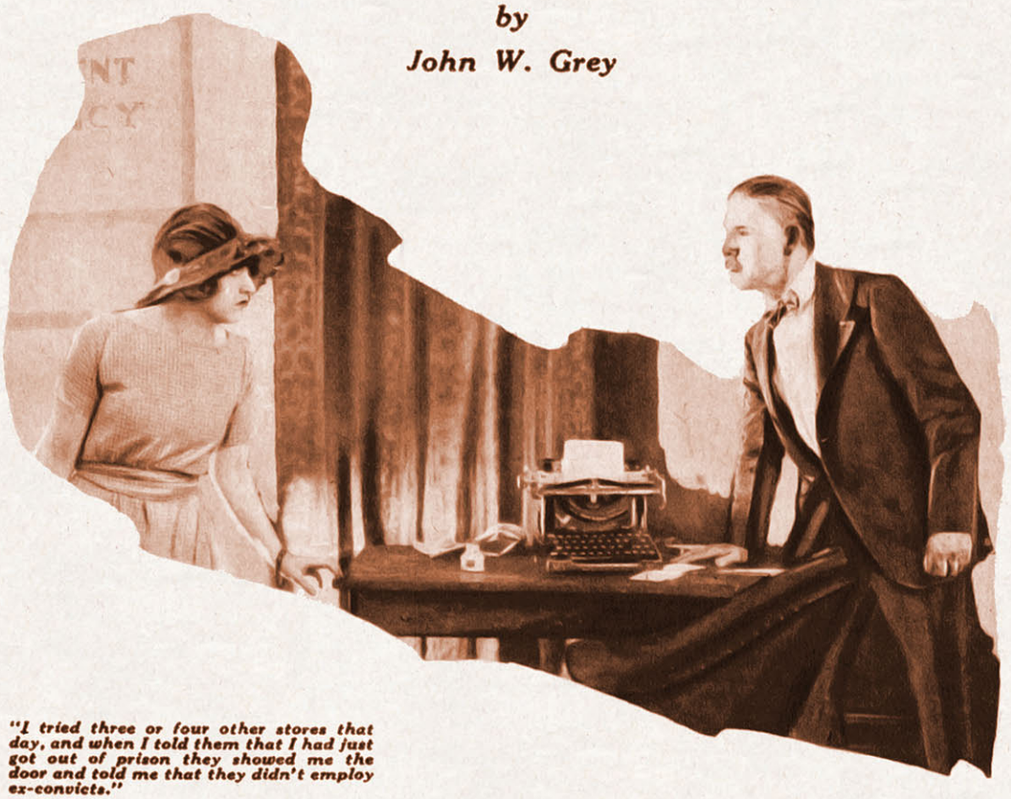
Part Three of a Four-Part Serial

by

John W. Grey

Synopsis

THE girl who tells the story was born into a life of squalor in New York, the eldest of three children. Her mother died when she was very young, leaving her with the care of her two little sisters. Her father was a worthless criminal and parasite, who lived upon her earnings, his days and his nights sunk in drink, degradation and evil companions. He was at last sentenced to the electric chair for a brutal murder and executed, leaving her and her sisters outcasts even in the low neighborhood in which they managed to exist. They moved. They found it impossible to live on the eight dollars per week the girl received as shipping clerk in a large department store, so, driven by destitution, she became a thief. She was caught stealing and sent to Blackwell's Island, where she was very badly treated.



"I tried three or four other stores that day, and when I told them that I had just got out of prison they showed me the door and told me that they didn't employ ex-convicts."

THE last night that I spent in that hell-hole on Blackwell's Island was the longest night that I've ever lived, the longest and the most agonizing one. I was dog tired, completely worn out after the day of drudgery, but nevertheless I couldn't sleep. Time lagged and hung. The seconds expanded into hours, the minutes into eternities of suspense. An uncanny, death-like silence prevailed in the great tomb of the living dead, not a sound of any kind could be heard except the falling footsteps of the guard as she patrolled the corridors of stone and steel.

All night long I rolled and tossed. All I could do was lie there in the dark and think, think, of the horrors of the past and the hopes of the future.

I was still wide awake when the first effulgence of the summer sun came streaming into the cell. I got up, went to the window and looked out at the breaking day. There was something in the delicate loveliness of the rose-red dawn that fascinated me as I pressed my head against the bars and inhaled the rich, winey air and thought of all the days that broke in beauty and set in ugliness and pain! A robin chirped in the dew-drenched garden just outside my cell, and when the light summer wind stirred amidst the trees—the odor of the honeysuckle came to my nostrils, the honeysuckle that crept up the side of the prison wall as though it were struggling to get beyond the wall to liberty.

Like the bourdon note of a distant organ the dim roar of awakening New York could be heard. Off in the long perspective I could see little puffs of white smoke that the crawling trains shot up into the sky as they struggled along with their cargoes. Through the gray dawn New York was just discernible. Great, titanic-like office buildings, spires and towers and bridges stood out majestically against the jagged sky line. I marvelled as I looked at these monuments of man's boundless dreams, his ambitions and his achievements, the handiwork of his brains and his brawn, his expressions of his notions of beauty, service and utility. I was enthralled at the panorama that was unfolded before my eyes as I peered out through the bars of my cell! Never had life seemed so wonderful, nor the sordid, ugly things of life more remote!

As I stood there and looked I wondered just what the future held in store for me. Was I going forth to happiness or what? How will people receive me now that I've been stigmatized "ex-convict?" Will I be able to obtain employment if I tell them about my past? I wonder if I shall be able to find just one man or woman in that great, throbbing city who will listen to my story, understand, and then give me a chance to rehabilitate myself? Or is the path and orbit of my life now marked out for me because I've worn the garb of the convict? Is it to be that I must always revolve about this one black insolence of my youth? Must I forswear all ambitions and forever trail my feathers with the outcasts? I thought of all these things and many others as I looked at the dawn remaking the world in its artistic pattern.

Well, I decided that I was going right back to the people who sent me to prison. I decided that I was going to ask my former employers and my former prosecutors for a position. I'm not going to run away from anybody, I thought; I've paid the price for my transgressions, the slate is clean, and if they are human beings they will give me a chance to expiate.

"TOUGH MAGGIE" was the last person to whom I spoke the morning that I was released. "Tough Mag," the prison officials had christened her, the girl whom they said was "incorrigible, beyond recall, hard."

"Good bye, kid," she said to me, "don't forget what I told y' about living on the square. Don't let anybody bull y' about the gay life. Be a good girl and everything will come out all right."

A woman that was "incorrigible, beyond recall, and hard," gave me that wholesome advice the day that I left the house of pain and stepped out into the sunlight of freedom!

Immediately upon my arrival in New York I went direct to the store, right up to the manager's office to ask him for a job. His face was a study when he saw me. He was a picture of surprise and astonishment when I walked boldly into his office. For a moment he didn't speak, he just sat there and looked at me as though I were a curiosity of some kind

"Good morning," I said to him.

"Good morning," he replied, "when did you get out of prison?"

"About an hour ago."

"Have a seat," he said, as he eyed me from head to foot.

When I sat down he continued the conversation.

"Well, I guess you're glad to get out and I hope that the prison taught you a lesson, taught you that one can never be dishonest and get away with it."

"Yes," I exclaimed, "it taught me many lessons."

"I'm glad to hear you say that there is nothing like being honest, even though one is poor, and I hope that you will be a better girl than you've ever been."

If I had had any understanding of life in those days I could have delivered a lecture to that hard-hearted old hypocrite that would have probably done him a lot of good. But I was only half alive, mentally, so his remarks went by unchallenged, and I took up the conversation where he left off.

"Yes," I began. "I intend to be a better girl

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than I have ever been, and I've come to ask you to give me a chance to prove that I'm sincere in what I say. I realize that I did wrong when I stole your money and I want to work and pay it back. Can you find a place for me in the store?"

I could see that my request was more or less of a surprise to him as he lolled back and forth in the big, upholstered chair, looking at the ceiling and shifting the cigar from one side of his mouth to the other.

"Now, I tell you," he began slowly, "I feel very sorry for you, much more, possibly, than you imagine and, much as I should like to, it is impossible for me to give you a position. You see—ah—we have a hard and fast rule in the firm that prohibits us from employing anybody with a prison record. I wish I could do something for you, my dear, but I'm afraid that it is impossible."

"I'll do anything," I interrupted him, "anything," I repeated. "Please find something for me to do; I've got to live and I need the work badly. Can't you please give me one more chance?"

"No, it can't be done." He shook his head. "You'll have to try some other store."

He got up, moved over to the door, opened it and said:

"You'll have to excuse me; I'm terribly busy."

So out I went, sick at heart and desperate, but not by any means discouraged, for my entire being was in revolt at the utter hypocrisy of this heartless man who refused to give me a chance to live, after moralizing with me about the good lessons that prisons teach.

I TRIED three or four other stores that day, and when I told them that I had just got out of prison they showed me the door and told me that they didn't employ "ex-convicts."

I tried for days and days to obtain employment, but none of them would have anything to do with me; no, none of them would employ an "ex-convict."

Finally, I became so desperate that I decided to continue on with my criminal career. If nobody will give me a chance to earn my living honestly, why then there isn't anything else left for me to do but steal. Automatically my mind drifted to the long, hard, bitter days that I had spent in the workhourse, where Society had sent me to be "reformed." I tried to reason out why it was that people were afraid to employ me and, even though I was nothing more than a kid, I had sense enough to realize the terrible injustice of it all. What a lot of hell there is in this world, I thought, and what a lot of people there are in the world with hellish hearts and loveless souls and fronts of saints—rabid, unthinking Philistines who are only concerned with the gross, materialistic side of life and never with the spiritualizing! Shall I ever meet anybody, I thought, with any understanding of the common currents and impulses of struggling humanity? What am I to do?

It is impossible for me to paint a word picture of my feelings, but if you have any imagination at all you can possibly sense the wretchedness that I endured, to say nothing of my blistering contempt for what Christ called the "whited sepulchre of respectability."

I was not bitter because I had been punished for my sins against Society. No; I can say that with all honesty. Neither was I bitter because of the cruelties that were heaped upon me in prison. None of these things made me hate as I did; it was the fact that they wouldn't give me a chance to earn an honest living after I had paid the price for my crime. It was the fact that they still considered me venomous, dirty, and unworthy of sympathy after I had been brutalized in the "institution of reform!"

These were the things that cut me to the bone, that made me bitter and vindictive. Their ostracism, their refusal of kinship, human relationship, their denial to me of the things that were mine by the right of a common humanity, by the right of a common divinity, by the right of justice and fair dealing and the great bond of love that one God-like human being should have for a less fortunate one!

But I was learning as I lived and as I suffered; yes, I was doing more than looking on and carrying my cross. My mind was beginning to function, and it didn't take me long to realize with perfect clearness of vision that I had to drop my real name and become another person if I were ever to obtain employment, so the next time that I went out to look for work I didn't tell anybody my real name or anything about my prison record. I should say not; no more of that story came from my lips. I lied to all the people from whom I solicited work. I told them that I had never worked before and that I had never been arrested. The more questions they asked me the more lies I told, for I was convinced that if I had told the truth they would have shut the doors on me.

When I lied and presumed to be something that I wasn't, why, it was perfectly easy for me to get a position; the easiest thing in the world, and I hated myself for my stupidity in not having arrived at that decision sooner than I did. The first position that I got was in the——Hospital. I was a general, all-round, handy girl, a lady of all trades. I washed windows and scrubbed floors, washed dishes and waited on the table. Later on I went up a step. I helped the nurses and the doctors. I ran errands for them, waited on them, did this, that, and the other thing. I made myself useful at every opportunity, and in doing so I made myself very much liked by the officials of the institution, all of whom had taken quite a fancy to me because of my indefatigable industry.

And they paid me some money for this work, much more than the hungry, grasping, mercenary, bloodsucking department store people paid me. I was getting twelve dollars a week and my board and room. I was living like a human being. I was happy. I attended night school and read all the books that I could get my hands on. I was an ambitious girl and I was determined to show my prosecutors and everybody else that I could go on up, up to the heights! I was in with a different set of people, away from those abnormal types of perverted individualism like the prison keepers, the department store people and detectives.

AFTER I had been working in the hospital for about five months I made an effort to get my two sisters released from the home. I went to see the Judge who had committed them, the Judge who had also committed me to Blackwell's Island.

"You're not a fit person to have charge of those children," he told me. The best that I could do was to visit them twice a month.

Along about this time of my life I met Jimmy. The first man and the first love of my youth. I was introduced to him by one of the girls with whom I worked in the hospital. I felt sure that Jimmy was the last word in love, the embodiment of all my girlish dreams, the realization of the ideal that I had always treasured in my heart.

And I presume that my ideal was not wholly unlike that of most poor girls who have had to fight and struggle for a livelihood. Jimmy was good-looking, he dressed well, and he talked fairly well, and from our first meeting he courted me with an ardency that beggars description. I was with him every night in the week, that is every night when I wasn't working. He would wait for me outside the night school that I was attending, escort me to the hospital grounds, where we would sit under a tree of a summer's evening and tell each other of the wonderful love that we had in our hearts. It was the first time in my life that I had ever had any social intimacy with a man. His tenderness and affection, the first tenderness and affection that had ever been in my life, simply swept me off my feet. As a young girl, I thought that I was madly in love with him, but of course I can see now that it was nothing but a wild, irrational infatuation, nothing else. However, when he proposed marriage, I consented, and I began to weave beautiful dreams of what the future would be like. First of all I let my ambitions flit back into oblivion; I was, so to speak, paralyzed with love. It seemed that nothing else mattered, nothing else was of consequence. I was now going to look into the incandescent flame, drink the highest wine. The perfume and the passion, the shine and the glory of vivid life was to be mine at last! No more heartaches, no more travail, no more struggles. No, I thought that all that had passed on never to return again! No more of the crucible of pain. Marriage with Jimmy meant my ascension into another world! Ah! the optimism of exultant and inextinguishable youth!

And then the resurrected drama of my past loomed up before me with all its horror and shame, its pain and its tragedy, and the beautiful dreams that I had been weaving about the future that I was to have with Jimmy, perished. Despair entered in their place and I was once again in the black, fathomless cave of remorse, dogged by the feet of my sins, haunted and agitated by the twisted and distorted phantoms that my conscience sent flying across the chambers of my brain!

I hadn't told Jimmy anything about my past, about the electrocution of my father in Sing Sing for murder, about my having served a term in Blackwell's Island. What will he do, I thought, if I should tell him? Ah! dear God! I shall never forget the torment of mind that I endured the night that he proposed marriage to me! I wanted to tell him all, everything, but somehow or other my heart and my nerve failed me when I got up to the psychological moment. I was dominated from the top of my head to the bottom of my feet with visions of losing him, losing the only human being who had shown me any love, any affection or sympathy if I told him that I was an "ex-convict" and the daughter of a murderer!

I was lashed and torn with conflicting emotions. One moment I was on the verge of making a revelation of what I had been while the next moment I revolted against it. I was sick and weary trying to decide just what was the sensible thing for me to do.

I was still quite young, not yet eighteen, but I had brains enough to realize that if I kept my secret, kept the story of what I had been under a cloud, any good opinions, or any love that my husband might entertain for me would not be justified. I would be getting his affection and his devotion under false pretences. I would not be what he thought I was. I would be living an eternal lie. I would be desecrating my marriage. My married life would be resting upon an insecure foundation, upon deceit, and sham, and subterfuge and hypocrisy!

I saw at once that genuine happiness under these conditions was an utter impossibility, unthinkable. No, it can never be, I thought. Day and night, my secret would be peering at me from silent corners, mocking at me from secret places, whispering in my ears when I sat down to eat, when I went to bed, when I arose. Day in and day out I should be constantly haunted with the fear of discovery!

In desperation I went to the parish priest. I recited in detail the story of my life, the terrible ending of my father and Jimmy's proposal of marriage.

"I need help and advice," I pleaded. "Please tell me what I shall do. Shall I tell this man all about my history?"

"Is he a Catholic?" the priest asked me.

"I don't know, Father," I replied. "I've never asked him what faith he professed."

"Then you should find out, my dear girl. You know, of course, that the church doesn't approve of marriage with a non-Catholic. If this man loves you he will embrace the Catholic faith and if he is the right sort he will overlook your unfortunate experiences. Have you been to confession since you were released from prison?"

"Yes, Father, to confession and communion several times."

"Then God has forgiven you and if He can forgive and forget, why it ought to be easy for your friend to do the same. Suppose you tell him to come and see me; I'd like to have a talk with him."

The words of the priest consoled me. I believed that his analysis was correct and logical. If Jimmy really loved me he would marry me, my past would not turn him against me, the fact that I had been in prison wouldn't alter his affections a particle so long as I was a virtuous girl. And then it occurred to me that he might have served a term in prison himself, and if such had been the case I don't think it would have made a bit of difference with me, for I was madly in love with him, at least I thought I was.

The next time that I saw Jimmy I made up my mind to tell him everything. If I lost him, why all well and good; it simply meant that another scar was carved in my heart, another ache, more pain and more tears!

He called for me at the hospital the next evening after my chat with the priest. I was trembling with excitement, nervous as could be, as we wended our way across the lawn to a bench under a great cypress tree, where we had sat many times in the moonlight and talked of our love.

(To be concluded)

The Woman Pays!
In coin current the world over
Read
"The Heart of a Tinpanner"
Beginning in next week's
MIDNIGHT

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NATURE'S GREAT FIGHT AGAINST MORALS

(*Continued from page 22*)

warm clothes. There was nothing else to do but take the necessary food and clothing. Thus stealing began from the first great impulse of human Nature.

Let us look to the law which forbids one man taking another man's life. Did you ever stop to realize when a man wrongs you that there is an impulse in your being to hurt that man physically? Did you ever stop in a moment of heated anger and figure out that at the bottom of your anger there was the sinister impulse to destroy—to kill? If so, you will realize how natural it is for man to hurt, or kill, the person who wrongs him.

Fortunately, years of tulelage in moral laws which forbid the taking of a human life have buried that terrible primitive impulse deep in our beings. The impulse to hurt and kill is always present when our anger is aroused, but it has to fight its way through so many barriers of moral conceptions that it burns itself out before reaching consummation in most cases.

I have said in no uncertain words that Nature is not moral, and that the codes which society depend upon to keep human beings in check are only inventions. I mean exactly all of that. But, I do not mean that these inventions are not needed very badly. It is surely a wonderful thing for the world that Man worked himself up to a mentality capable of designing curbs to his natural impulses. But, while we are praising Man for his inventions, we must also stop and make the admission that there would be no need for such inventions if it were not for the fact that Nature has always been, and always will be, in revolt against what are popularly conceived as moral laws.

Why the three clergymen I approached should have been alarmed at my intention of writing an article dealing with the fact that Nature is against our code of moral laws is beyond the pale of my comprehension. I cannot see that facing a grave truth will hurt us. In this case, the truth should be a great help. It is much better, I am sure, to risk the possibility of being charged with "blasphemy and spiritual bolshevism" and tell the people the truth, than it is to go in our allegorical theory that a horned Satan tempts us when all of our human temptations are but the rebellion of our Nature against the moral laws.

At least the truth will enable us to know we have got to put up our great fight against our natural impulses and not an invisible spirit of Hell. It will make us stop shooting in the dark and grapple with something tangible—our natural impulses and instincts.

If we remember that it is much more natural for us to break the moral laws than to keep them we certainly ought to be better prepared to fight off sexual, and all other temptations. In order to do this you simply have to remember that Nature is not moral, and be on your guard to check the impulses which prompt us to smash the moral laws.

MY GREATEST MIDNIGHT THRILL

(*Continued from page 20*)

IF YOU BELIEVE IT, IT'S SO

IN a branch of the world's greatest postoffice, we of the midnight shift were busy receiving mail from a steamer just arrived from West Indian and South American ports. One of the boys started to empty a bag of mixed mail, consisting of samples of chocolate, cocoa beans, coffee, and a clutter of oddities, such as mounted scarab beetles, sea-shells, star-fish, etc., when we were horrified to see a hideous tarantula roll out from among the mail articles. We scattered, but to our great relief it proved to be dead.

The one man climbed upon the opening table, the better to empty the sack. Standing among the mail, he was seen to grasp frantically at the calf of his trouser leg, and he screamed that he had been bitten by the mate of the dead spider we had found! He fell sprawling off the table to the floor, rolling in agony, and cried that the harder he held, the more intense became the pain from the fangs of the monster.

In the meantime, someone ran to summon an ambulance, and another had the presence of mind to suggest that the pant's leg be cut to remove the creature. Several minutes had elapsed, and the crowd of employes parted to admit the ambulance surgeon, who had arrived, just as somebody started to cut the cloth of the garment. Kneeling beside the prostrate figure, the doctor grasped the grisly protuberance, at which the victim fainted dead away.

All tensed as the cut was made, and necks were craned as the medico wielded a skillful knife and gingerly removed—

A wad of chewing gum that had somehow become entangled in the hair of the calf; and of course the more he pulled, the more painful it had been!

To this day the central figure of this incident remains "Spider" to his friends.

H. M. Hagerman.

* * * *

WHAT KIND OF LIQUOR

I was reading a thrilling detective story in an isolated shack situated in the Maine woods one stormy night. Suddenly a scraping, crawling noise, accompanied by spasmodic, gutteral, unintelligible utterances became audible in the kitchen, the closed door of which connected with my room.

A violent maniac reputed to have super-human strength and homicidal propensities, had escaped that afternoon from a nearby asylum. No wonder my hair stood on end as I sat frozen with horror should this monster enter my room God! The thing was fumbling at the door, which slowly opened. Having no firearm at hand, I hastily rose to snatch a log from the fireplace. In doing so, the lamp upset and went out. Flashing my pocket light at the door, I beheld a gory hand clutching the air. Raising the log to deal a death blow, the "thing" fell to the floor in a heap as though dead.

Some premonition fortunately prompted me to stay my arm. It was my comrade who had come home a bit the worse from too much liquor.

T. O. Wassung.

* * * *

DON'T FORGET ! ! !

This great contest ends at Midnight, October 14, 1922

You have a chance to win a prize

DUTY

I AM a private detective, young and just out of college. My first assignment was the Corn Exchange Bank. The manager of the bank left his instructions. I was to admit absolutely no one except the man who was to relieve me in the early morning, and to fire away at anyone attempting to force an opening.

It was dark when the following occurred:

I was startled by a light tapping on the glass of the front door. Throwing my light in that direction and reaching for my gun I leaned over to behold a beautiful young lady standing in the entrance. I was about to run over and open for her, to tell her that banking hours were long over, when I remembered my instructions, and motioned to her instead, indicating that I could not admit her and pointing to the notice of banking hours. She insisted that I let her in. Her indignation was charming. Temptation was urging me to give way. I fet something irresistible slowly creeping over me. It was lonely and very quiet. Perhaps—but duty cooled me again, as quickly as the other had come. She went away in reluctant, shy protest.

Fifteen minutes later the manager and his wife came to the door. I admitted them both. They congratulated me on my stubbornness. The manager's wife was none other than the lady who tried to have me open the door for her. It was a test for the new man, for me. It sure was some test! Then the manager told me to load my guns. I looked. They had been emptied by him before he had left.

Charles Wagner.

* * * *

SAVED BY THE GLASSES!

LOST in the woods, we took possession of a deserted cabin. It was pitchy dark, but luckily Jim had his flashlight along. We heard a queer noise beneath the floor, and tore up a board. We could see nothing, so Jim went outside to cast the light between the floor joist, while I looked.

I was kneeling, with my head down through the opening, looking *away* from the light. I saw nothing and presently turned to look *toward* the light. The glare half-blinded me, for a moment, then I saw IT.

Not more than three inches from my nose, coiled ready to strike, his forked black tongue darting out and in with incredible speed, his beady eyes glistening in the light, lay a huge rattlesnake!

Every faculty seemed paralyzed with horror! In a second's time I lived a year, it seemed. I was face to face with a horrible death, and I knew it, yet I *could* not move. The light fell full upon the *thing*, the rattles buzzing against the floor, the slithering tongue, the horrible flat head slowly drawing back to strike, still I could not move. I held my breath, the light blinded me again—then *it* struck!

And what power behind that blow! I screamed in fearful terror, and fell back on the floor. Jim rushed in and looked for the wound. There was no wound! He pulled my glasses off and found a broken fang wedged between the rim and the glass. Evidently the *thing* had struck at the glass, glistening in the light. The blow had driven the glass against the eyeball, giving the impression of terrific force. The rattles had vibrated against the floor, deadening the sound, hence our failure to recognize it. My glasses had saved my life!

John Joseph.

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How I Begged a Fortune

(*Continued from page 5*)

money by being just a plain cripple, keeping clean and just looking as if you were out of luck.

Daddy Nolan—he's around fifty—also pulled a bad one that ought to bar him from good society. With colored glasses, a tin cup, a "Help the Blind" sign and his wrist done up in a rag spotted with red ink, he was begging when a dick behind him heard him cuss a man who only dropped a penny in his cup. The cop went away but came back and dropped a lead nickel. As he started away, Daddy yelled that it was a counterfeit, and that was his finish.

I tell you it pays to be honest in this game. If you're crooked, bad luck will get you. I remember "Sneaker" Schmidt's case. He was big and husky, and the only thing the matter with him was that he hated work. He decided to do the blind racket, and every day at Fourteenth Street and Sixth Avenue he used to sit in front of a store window, with his eyes wide open starin' at the sun. Well, the bad luck got him all right, for finally the sun made him blind. None of that rough stuff for mine.

Then there was a lot more bunk printed in the papers about us working for bosses who took most of what we collected. There's about as much truth in that as there is in a janitor's promise. Maybe a few of the new ones fall for some guy who promises police protection for a split, but nothing doing for us wise ones. Why should we give up and how can anybody make us split?

I know that some of the boys have their relatives meet them in quiet places and take away some of their coin, so they won't have much on them if they're pinched, but most of us keeps our money right in our clothes 'till we can get to the bank. We don't let too much stay in the hat, though, for the sight of a lot of coin might keep people from kicking in.

It's also the bunk that we have a regular organization and clubs. The New York beggars have got an organization as much as the guys that blow the holes in the Swiss cheese have a union. Of course a lot of us get together nights and talk and play cards and have a few drinks, but that ain't clubs.

Those of us who can read keep in touch with the things in the papers every day, and know the best places to go, like if there's a parade or anything where there's a crowd. Of course, the blind ones and those that didn't go to school have to get help. Some of them are tipped by their family, but a lot of the boys pays fellers to read the papers to 'em. We got a feller over in Tenth Avenue who reads and picks out the good places. I do my own pickings. That feller's name is Markey, but everybody calls him the "Professor." In the summer when things are dull in the city, we go down to Jamaica and work the race-track people or to the beaches. There's always some soft places, even when it rains. Then we work the railroad stations, subway entrances and the "L" stairs.

If I can keep my health a few years more I ought to be able to clean up enough to go down on my farm and stay there. Maybe I'll get enough to set my kids up in business. Anyway, I don't want them to get wise to my graft. So far they think I'm a checker in a wholesale house, where I can sit down to my work.

Now Who's Looney?

(*Continued from page 7*)

our forefathers. Fill the churches and empty the asylums."

"Perfectly natural," the scientists assert confidently. "It is the outcome of the war and the emotions engendered by such a vast cataclysm. Don't worry. We'll all turn right side up."

"It is the dawn of a new era," the radicals shout with upturned eyes. "The proletariat is beginning to realize their opportunities."

"Blame the flappers, motion pictures, the drama and twentieth century literature," the reformers protest.

And so it goes on and on, getting worse and worse—murders, rape, suicides, elopements, divorce——

Until it is possible to believe that *nearly everyone* is mentally unbalanced.

One million boys are back from the war, many of them without jobs, and nearly all seared by the slogan kill—kill—kill.

Every seventh marriage in the United States lands in the divorce courts.

Two hundred thousand criminals are incarcerated in our jails. Thousands, uncaught, roam the streets. Thousands are released from jail every day, to continue their careers of crime because the State doesn't know yet how to handle the so-called criminal element.

Underpaid or overpaid workers, arrogant employers, unscrupulous labor leaders, radicals, the Ku Klux Klan, lynchings, the negro problem, flappers, erotic fiction, dope fiends, jazz, wood alcohol—just to mention a few adjuncts to modern civilization.

Is it any wonder that so many people are crazy?

It is a wonder that so many remain sane.

Women and Suicide

(*Continued from page 15*)

In every calling there are beautiful women who forget their beauty in their work.

BUT the dreariest desert is that travelled by those who have nothing to do but to find pleasure for themselves. The paper publishing that pitiful diary just referred to headed the page on which it appeared with a couplet from the unhappy Oscar Wilde, who left no experiment for pleasure untried and found the bitterness that lies that way:

"To drift with every passion, until my soul
Is a stringed lute on which all winds can play."

Then, when the pleasure-seeker's money gives out, and one needs money for making pleasure a business, when the drugs craved by tortured nerves cannot be purchased, when friends drift away; as the weakened will becomes less and less able to set itself to any task; when work, at first sought eagerly, now listlessly, cannot be secured, when disappointment after disappointment, defeat after defeat follows swiftly—then it is small wonder that Beauty should turn to Death for a final consolation.

Perhaps, too, who knows? the love affairs of beautiful women are intenser than those of others. That would seem likely. Delicate, sensitive in the extreme, impatient—when they are baffled or detained by the Lover they seek, they catch Death's tempting whisper—and yield to his dark embrace.

And I wonder if beautiful women do not feel loneliness more keenly. Of all drives toward self-destruction I suppose that is the strongest—to reach out and find no hand to touch. Hands there would always be, if other minds knew of the anguish. But the beautiful girl, because of others' interest in her beauty and admiration for it, grows, one may believe, to depend for her satisfactions upon that admiration. She is likely to be more conscious of the presence of others. And when ill-fortune shuts her suddenly away from these circles of admirers the loss is too great. The loneliness is too keen. It is unendurable. So—welcome Death, who is always near at hand, greedy for Beauty which he can take to himself.

These recent cases have taught our big town something. Some lessons are good for the happy and the strong, some are good for the sad and weak. I think the clearest lesson, not by any means new, but coming forth now with new clearness, is that suicide is always needless. If the distracted mind could only see a little farther! Lillian Gay, raising the fatal bottle to her lips just as her lover's car stopped at the door. The two other girls who failed to win the death they sought, finding that the town was filled with friendliness.

There is always somebody who cares.

Sold to the Devil

(*Continued from page 26*)

say to him. He glanced at her and found her looking at him with an expression of frank admiration, in which was mingled what seemed to him to be tenderness. He was not in the least flattered, but was considerably annoyed, not to say alarmed.

"Isn't this early for you?" he asked, seeking to give the impending conversation a commonplace turn.

"One needs to get up early to keep pace with you," she answered. "You are as subtle as you are strong, Mr. Street. Or may I call you Mr. Lane, now?"

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"I prefer Street for the present."

"Street it shall be then. But tell me: Why do you take this distant manner toward me? After all we are allies. And you must admit that you got the combination from me."

He looked at her curiously, wondering whither she was tending. "I don't understand you."

"Yes you do. Play fair, Mr. Street!" There was more than a hint of annoyance in her tone.

He set his jaw. "No, I don't understand you. Why do you say I got the combination from you? You know I refused to take it."

"I know that you refused to take it, but I know now how much I underrated you. You read it even while you refused to take it."

"I did nothing of the sort," he cried indignantly. "I couldn't have done it if I had tried. And I didn't try because I didn't wish to know it. You know that perfectly well."

"You knew it before, then. You certainly are very strong, Mr. Street. Jim has met his Waterloo, I'm thinking."

"Will you be good enough to say plainly what you mean?" he asked sharply. "I did not know then and I don't know now what the combination was."

SHE bit her lip and made an angry gesture. She made Lane think of a snarling panther. Then she controlled herself and said smoothly, "I think you are carrying it too far. Why don't you trust me?"

"I have no reason to either trust or mistrust you, Mrs. Walters."

"You mean you feel so secure that you may throw me over now."

"I told you yesterday that I would have nothing to do with your schemes. That is all I mean now."

She clenched her little hands and her eyes flamed, but she controlled herself. "You know that the safe was opened and the paper taken?"

"Yes, I know that."

"And you took the papers."

"I did not take them, as you know very well. What is your object in trying to implicate me? I have no desire to share with you. You have made your bargain with your husband."

She started to her feet, her beautiful face twisted in anger, her bosom rising and falling tumultuously. It was evidently in her mind to flame forth in furious imprecation. But suddenly she controlled herself, and her face took on an expression of cajolery. "Why should we be enemies?" she said softly; and seated herself again. "I admit that I am beaten. But listen to reason! It is true that I can do nothing without you, but on the other hand you will do better with my help. I can negotiate with Jim better than you can. Do you know what Jim has agreed to give me for the papers?"

"Yes, five millions."

"That is my share. If we work it right we can get as much more out of him. Here is what I will do: I'll agree to give you five millions and be content with anything I can get over that. No one can manage Jim as well as I can. Will you do it?"

He stared at her with a mingling of disgust and surprise. "Do you want me to believe that you haven't the papers?" he demanded.

"Of course I haven't them. You know I haven't."

"Then," he said rising, "somebody else has them, and I am not he."

"I don't believe you. Who else could have them?"

"I don't know; but I do know that if you haven't them and don't know where they are——"

"I do know who has them. You have."

"You are wrong; and I must see Mr. Walters and tell him that the papers are in the hands of someone else unknown."

"You fool! you fool!" she gasped, as he started

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away; "but you'll not get away with it. I'll not be cheated. You are worse than Jim. But if you want fight you shall have it."

He quickened his step to get away from her, but she leaped up and followed after him, her voice rising to a scream until her breath gave out. But she still clung to him, not two yards separating them.

Then, all at once they came upon Walters, who was seeking his secretary. He stopped and stared at them. "What's the matter?" he cried.

"I have something important to tell you, Mr. Walters," answered Lane.

But Mrs. Walters, her face convulsed with passion, pushed past him and confronted her husband. "So have I," she panted. "Do you know who this man is, Jim?"

Walters stared from her to the young man, waiting for her to go on. And she went on, her voice rising shrilly: "He is the one who opened the safe and took the papers. His name isn't Street; it's Lane. Don't let him get away; he has the papers."

(To be continued)

Have You Any Suggestion?

Write the Editors of MIDNIGHT and unburden your mind.

We are glad to hear from you.

Your Name Reveals Your Character

The ancient science of numerology, about which few people of the present day know, was invented by Pythagoras. It is a short, sweet, and simple way of reading your innermost characteristics by an easy linking up of the letters of your name with numerals from one to ten. Read about it in next week's MIDNIGHT.

Don't Monkey With the Women.

You'll be amused by the manner in which our gland expert (?) draws his conclusions with respect to the rumor that Serge Voronoff, of Paris is experimenting with monkey glands for women. Have a good laugh with us in next week's MIDNIGHT.

Couldn't Find a New Yorker--in New York

The young man was sent out on an assignment to dig up, in New York City, a man or woman who was born there. It was a long, hard search, but the reward was ample. In next week's MIDNIGHT.

The Bells of Hell go Ting-a-ling-a-ling!

But not for you or me, says the ribald song. In a characteristic editorial from his vigorous, two-fisted pen, Bernarr Macfadden takes a fall out of those who think they can beat the game, Next week's MIDNIGHT.

Do the Blue Laws Make You Blue?

Read what one of America's most eminent fighting dominies has to say about censorship in next week's MIDNIGHT. He is the Rev. John Haynes Holmes. Now you have an idea what you may expect!

The Heart of a Tinpanner.

Do you know what a tinpanner is? A tinpanner is a female resident of New York who falls into the unhappy middle ground between the depths of the show girls of Broadway and the heights of society girls on Fifth Avenue. She has to live, some way or other. She has to pay a price for living. Some of these girls pay a greater price than others—but they all pay. Read W. Carey Wonderley's great serial starting in next week's MIDNIGHT.

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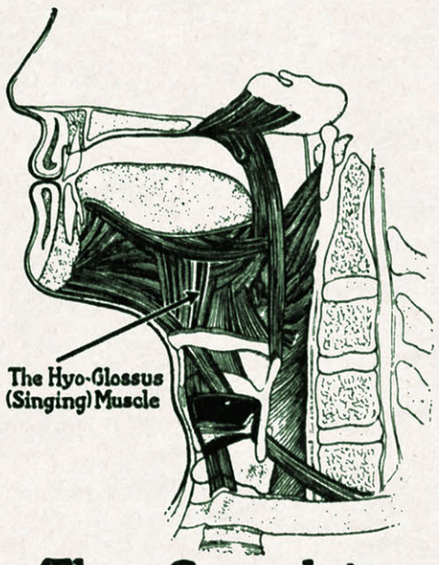
The Secret of Caruso's Greatness



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Who Professor Feuchtinger Is

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